

THE STORY OF THE COUP D'ETAT

BY M. DE MAUPAS

(FORMER MINISTER)

FREELY TRANSLATED, WITH NOTES, BY

ALBERT D. VANDAM

AUTHOR OF "SKETCHES OF FRENCH SOCIETY," ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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PREFACE.

OUR principal aim in the writing of this first part of our Memoirs* was to trace back the events of the 2nd December; we wished to show the concatenation of circumstances that made it a necessity, to bring to light the consequences it produced.

Why did we call Memoirs what might more logically have been entitled the History of the 2nd December? A few words will suffice to explain.

In a work purely historical, the writer is bound to carefully stand outside the facts he exposes. And the part we took in those events of which we have to speak rendered a complete abstraction of our personality impossible. What we saw, did, and knew, had, in order to preserve its interest, to be presented at certain moments in the form peculiar to Memoirs. With our title we were more at liberty to describe and to give a series of

* The title of the original work is "Mémoires sur le Second Empire," par M. de Maupas, Ancien Ministre.

details which a rigorously historical method would have compelled us to present in a less vivid form.

In entering as we did into the intimate details of this interesting period, which begins and ends with the Presidency of Louis Napoleon, we laid ourselves open perhaps to awaken once more certain susceptibilities, to rekindle the anger of many. And yet more than thirty years have passed since the events we are about to describe. At such a distance should not facts appear already in their true light? May not an impartial judgment of them be expected? It is because of this, that we have not without some impatience, easily to be explained, waited until now to publish these Memoirs. We found another advantage in this adjournment. We were able to see the growth of a series of publications that by their calumnies scandalously outraged truth, and we were prompted by the examination of those libels to restore to their true proportions facts that had been completely perverted.

More, perhaps, was expected of us : the detailed rectification of all the falsehoods invented by our detractors. We might, in fact, have afforded ourselves this satisfaction ; but to what endless digressions would not such a method of refutation have led ? Was it not jeopardizing one's dignity to

condescend to the justification of a lot of improbable impostures? Another course was open to us, namely, to simply expose authentic facts, to write, with the documents before us, the true history of the Presidency of Louis Napoleon, and especially that of the 2nd December. It is to this latter course that we made up our minds.

We did, however, not debar ourselves from alluding as we went on, and as a kind of sample, to some of the enormities which it has pleased the pamphleteers in renown to invent; but we made it a point to confine our rectifications to the exact limits prescribed by necessity.

Many friends counselled us to still postpone our publication. While deferentially admitting the justice of some of their observations, two reasons decided us to wait no longer. Here is the first.

By the side of some enlightened minds, who have assuredly estimated, from the simple perusal, at their true worth the inventions of those who insulted us, there are credulous folk who often take for gospel, without the least distrust, anything and everything that the printing-press puts under their eyes. We have often had occasion to notice this, and it seemed to us a pity to let error prevail any longer.

The second consideration that prompted us to

defer our publication no longer is equally important. We were bound to look for not only criticism—criticism is a right—but for attack and contradiction. We have our hands full of proofs, or, to speak by the card, we know where to lay hands on them; we did not wish to abdicate the strength they provide us with in case of need. We wished to reply and to show, if required, that our work is in no way a work of party.

To praise that which is worthy of praise can, in fact, not be called a work of party. If praise of the Prince's policy often emanates from our pen, it is because praise is frequently deserved. Facts will show this; every conscientious man, to whatever party he may belong, will be bound to admit them. By a coincidence, on which we gratulate ourselves from more than one point of view, the period of Louis Napoleon's power of which we speak in these pages is indisputably the one which will shed the greatest honour on his memory. In showing this, proof in hand, we simply performed an act of conscience. And if further proof were needed to attest our sincerity, we should say to our readers: this proof will not fail to be forthcoming at our hands. We have, in fact, written on the last years of the Empire a work to be published shortly; it will be the second part of our *Memoirs*.

Things have changed in this painful period. We will fatally be confronted with the errors of the Empire, and then we shall be able to show that we can, without weakness, allot to each his part of the responsibilities, and respond to the duties imposed upon the author. But there is no need to provide our own security, we fearlessly await from this day the judgment of the honest. They will say that we have written in good faith and without partiality.

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THE STORY OF THE COUP D'ETAT.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRIMARY CAUSES OF OUR REVOLUTIONS.

The various phases of the Revolution in France—1830 and 1848.—Louis Napoleon elected representative of the people.—He declines the honour and is re-elected.—The first glimmerings of the Empire.

WHEN a nation wishes to break with her past, to abandon her traditional customs and her fundamental laws, in order to embark upon the road to reform, and thus to create for herself new institutions, assuredly such an enterprise is not the work of a day. A long travail of her great thinkers prepares the crisis; a supreme effort brings it to a head, a number of years are needed to regulate its effects. In fact, if we examine the lives of peoples, if we study the history of their social and political transformations, if we carefully follow the march of their civilisation, we observe how fraught with labour are those evolutions that lead to grandeur or decline.

France is passing through one of those formidable crises. We must go back to the latter years of the age of Louis XIV. to find the germs of the political and social movement that has caused so terrible a quaking in our unfortunate country. Under the Regency, and during the long years of Louis XV.'s reign, the malady gets worse; and the first glare of that immense conflagration which from France spreads over a part of Europe becomes perceptible.

Under the reign of Louis XVI. the revolutionary idea appears with open vizard; it asserts and constitutes itself. The leaders of the movement no longer conspire only, they act. They negotiate with the powers that be, then they dictate their laws, until the day when, feeling themselves strong enough to deliver their last assault, they sap and overthrow the old monarchic fabric whence had issued centuries of grandeur and prosperity to France.

No concession, no submission, succeeded in abating the exactions, to stay the explosion. Louis XVI. made every effort with which a love of justice and patriotism could inspire a sovereign. He understood that the movement which shook France was not one of those that could be repressed; he had devoted himself to the search after useful reforms; he drew back at no sacrifice to arrive at

what he deemed the interests of the country. If, like the King, the promoters of the Revolution had merely desired the triumph of good, the movement would have remained within pacific limits ; it would have been fruitful of weal, instead of being prodigal of disaster ; it would have opened a new era of prosperity, instead of accumulating sorrow and ruin.

Not those, however, who unchain popular passions are the masters to direct their course. The leaders of the Revolution were quickly overwhelmed by it, and one after another became its victims. The year 1793 was the culminating point of the crisis ; and history, as she condemned the fatal date, bestowed upon it its veritable name—the Terror. The Terror once vanquished, the Revolution resumed its task. If it ceased to be sanguinary, it ceased not, and for long afterwards, to be disastrous ; for so long, in fact, that at the present hour we are still writhing within the grip of the terrible evil, the final aim of which remains a problem. The power of the revolutionary idea must have been deeply rooted indeed for the gigantic and glorious diversions of the Empire to have failed to prevent a resumption of its sway. The 18th Brumaire was the first revenge of order on anarchy, and the first return to reason. From amid the ruins the genius of Napoleon brought forth an entirely new

world. Utopian visions, adventurous and subversive ideas, were put back. The acceptable claims of the Revolution, those that could, without commotion and in unison with royalty, have been introduced to our system of laws, took a legal shape. At the fall of the Empire, the brother of the unfortunate Louis XVI. himself admitted and developed, when he took the crown, what were termed the conquests of the Revolution; and under this able monarch France essayed the putting into practice of her new institutions.

But no nation can be worked up with impunity to a state of ferment such as the French had arrived at between 1789 and 1793. The advanced Liberals of 1815 were no longer satisfied with a power in which every interest was safeguarded, in which all the liberties compatible with order were proclaimed by the charter. The Revolution then assumed the character it has not abandoned since; one might say that it threw down the mask. Those who directed it, like those who followed in their wake, showed their true motives—the satisfaction of the appetites of the ambitious of all classes. It was, in fact, to scale the heights of power that some of these latter overthrew the throne in 1830; it was to wrest that power from them that in 1848 some others shattered the crown of Louis Philippe,

to bring our unhappy country back once more to days of trial and suffering.

In the eyes of some, the Revolution of 1830 had only substituted one crown for another. Truth to tell, the soreness of defeat was only met with among the upper classes. The people themselves were not affected, save in certain provinces particularly attached to the Bourbon family. The majority of the nation remained indifferent. Between the charter of 1814 and that of 1830 there were, as far as the people were concerned, no appreciable differences: to them it was a mere change of reign; it was not a disturbance of their habits. The fundamental laws of the State remained the same; there was a consciousness of being protected—nothing more was asked for. Dynastic faith was extinguished; the wish for peace, order, and security had replaced political opinions; the fears aroused by the first news of the triumphant revolution had been dispelled; the satisfaction of having escaped some perilous eventualities created almost everywhere a genuine outburst of joy.

Nevertheless, it should be said that the young generation had yielded to the unreasoning enthusiasm for liberty, and that its joy was sincere. The press had already worked its ravages. A breach

had been made in the essential principles of our social life. The years 1789 and 1793 had left a heritage of hatred of the nobility and clergy; this hatred found its satisfaction in the events that had just been accomplished. One might say that 1830 was the triumph of evil over good.

In 1848 the shock was much more violent than it had been in 1830. Everything seemed threatened; the mere word Republic caused a profound alarm. The year 1793 was not sufficiently distant not to dread its return, even if an excessive want of skill had not caused the then rulers to seek in the arsenal of the stormy past for everything that could revive its memory. Everything in this exhibition inspired fear, even to the affectation, more ridiculous than dangerous, of resuscitating the obsolete vocabulary of 1793. To them it seemed the best means of republicanizing the country; it only succeeded in alienating confidence. But they did not stop at words merely; they wanted to resume the Revolution at the point where the courageous initiative of the First Consul had compelled it to stop. The country was flooded with agents who spread fear everywhere, and the majority of whom preached the most subversive doctrines. Some deputies of the Left of the last Chamber, and some honest Republicans, had accepted this mission.

Fortunate indeed were those departments where their saving action was exercised. But they were but the feeble exceptions: the majority of those improvised delegates hailed from some doubtful haunts; some were the Dead Sea fruit of the bar or of journalism, others the pillars of third-rate cafés and beershops, street-orators or former political offenders. Such men gave but a sorry idea of the power that had accredited them. The Provisional Government naturally wanted to inaugurate the Republic with the Republicans *de la veille* (of the vigil*), to use an expression of the time. Those who had been in the struggle meant to have a part of the spoil; they had to be tolerated. Those men with sinister faces and vulgar habits, who could only threaten and be violent, treated their departments like conquered countries. Where would the Government stop with such auxiliaries? Such was the question every one asked of himself from one end of France to the other.

The Republic of 1848 had been a surprise rather than the triumph of the idea pursued by the promoters of the movement. The Chamber only wished to obtain one reform; the leaders of the Opposition only aspired to take the places of their

* At the same time a skit upon the old soldiers of Napoleon's army, who were called "*les vieux de la vieille*."—*Translator*.

antagonists. But the truth of what we stated already became manifest once more; it is not those who let loose the popular storm that can direct or arrest its current. The Left of the Chamber, at the head of which were MM. Thiers, Odilon Barrot, Duvergier de Hauranne, and other parliamentary notabilities, was overwhelmed and treated as suspects and as an enemy. It was the first and just punishment of its own errors. In a few hours the trick had been accomplished in favour of the unscrupulous.

But just as the Monarchy represents and favours order and stability, so does the Republic carry with it a state of ferment and instability. Mutability is its very essence, the reason of its existence. On the plea of perfecting its institutions, the remodelling of them becomes continual; the changing of its most essential doctrines becomes a never-ceasing question, and the mutation of persons necessarily follows those transformations. Every ambition under this régime being necessarily on the alert; one crisis is scarcely ended before another begins. The leading dogma of the Republic is the dogma of agitation. The crisis of 1848 afforded numerous and successive examples of this truth. The insurrection had scarcely succeeded in Paris, thanks to this revolutionary engine of modern invention called the

National Guards, when the National Guards themselves gave the signal for reaction. The famous manifestation termed of the "Bear-Skins"—a manifestation without arms and truly imposing—was a warning to the Provisional Government, a summons to return within the practices of a moderate programme. To the excitement of the first hour succeeded then a comparative moderation. M. de Lamartine had the courage to substitute the tricolor flag for the red one; but shortly afterwards the counter-movement took place. The days of June (1848), this immense outbreak of fratricidal war, showed France the perils to which she was exposed, the desperadoes with whom she had to deal, and the disorders the real Republicans meant to reduce her to. Then, after the victory of the army over the revolt, the reaction grasped power once more; it was indeed the picture of the Republic and its never-ending vicissitudes that was thus unfolded to the intent and terror-stricken gaze of the country.

We say nothing but what is strictly logical when we maintain that those revolutionaries by trade, those agitators by temperament and by education, thus proved themselves, against their will, the most useful promoters of the Empire—the men who unconsciously but efficaciously prepared the

great day of reaction, the 2nd December. The further we proceed in this narrative, the more we shall become aware that the nomination of Prince Louis Napoleon to the Presidency, the 2nd December, and the Empire itself, are the results of the excesses of 1848; of the excitements and riots that were their natural consequences; of the uneasiness and anguish that took possession of men's minds; in short, of the troubles into which the Republic had thrown the country. Did not the facts themselves demonstrate this undeniable truth? The world's law, like that of nations and of individuals, is not to resign one's self to an unhappy lot without making at least every possible effort to shake off its grasp. The cure of the disease is ardently sought for, the least ray of hope is fondly cherished and pursued as long as there is the faintest hope of making it a happy reality. France in her distress of 1848 eagerly sought the only means of deliverance which were still possible. The Republic, even rendered more human by the comparative prudence of General Cavaignac, offered her nothing but troublous horizons; the majority of the nation wanted, at any cost, to separate themselves from this form of government, and they turned their glances everywhere in the endeavour to find a saviour.

The marked preference of the country was in favour of the monarchical idea. But which monarchy was possible? Where was the prince with sufficient devotion to accept a situation so big with peril, with sufficient popularity, sufficient strength and authority, to conquer the difficulties inseparable from a restoration?

The elder branch of the Bourbons was assailed throughout the land by a series of abominable slanders that had absolutely become part and parcel of the popular belief. To overthrow the Republic in favour of Legitimacy was an enterprise not to be realised. Hence salvation could not come from that side.

The Orleans family had just descended the throne. The anger that had pursued them was still too burning to make the return of one of their princes possible. However capable they might have been, it would have been a provocation. Only the forlorn hope of the party indulged this dream. But public opinion was not with them; and, seeing that a practical solution was aimed at, that the intention was to act for the benefit of the country, and not in the interest of an individual, or even of a dynasty, the idea of an Orleanist combination was with almost common accord dismissed.

It requires no great effort of the imagination to

discover which other dynasty could give a sovereign to the country. The Napoleonic legend was still a living, breathing thing among the people. The splendour of the victories of the Empire had had sufficient power to efface the humiliation of its defeat; only the grand days of Rivoli, Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, and Wagram were on the people's lips. The actors in this grand *épos* still filled our rural districts, where they told their reminiscences; and the little ones of the new generations while learning to speak learned at the same time to admire and to glorify Napoleon. Every cottage boasted the portrait of the great man, the pictures of his battles, the popular episodes of his life. Their possession was at the same time the evidence of national pride, of laudable patriotism, and the visible translation of a political preference; it was a profession of faith.

Given the existence of a man who by inheritance had the mission to resuscitate the Empire, that man was assured beforehand of an immense popular enthusiasm. That man existed; he was called Louis Napoleon Bonaparte; he was the nephew of Napoleon and the heir to his throne; he was but little past the prime of life, and could hold the reins of government himself. The day when the country, which up till now had had no interest in

watching his career, recovered the memory of his existence, that day Louis Napoleon became the pointed-out saviour, the sovereign designated to deliver France from the whirlpool of anarchy.

And, in fact, what more significant evidence of the popular feeling could be found than the spontaneous manifestation of universal suffrage on the 6th June, 1848? Partial elections had been held in a number of departments; some hot partisans had brought forward the name of Louis Napoleon as a candidate for a seat in the Constituent Assembly. The one spark sufficed to produce the flame. Four departments, among which was that of the Seine, elected as their representative the nephew of Napoleon and the heir to his crown.

We need not stop at this first period of Louis Napoleon's elevation. It would be without interest to show in this place the umbrage taken by the Republicans at this mark of popular favour which came to seek him out, as it were—to insist upon the calumnies, the attacks and the persecutions that caused him to decline the trust of representative. We only wish to deduce from those facts the demonstration of such truths as this book will bring to light. Louis Napoleon was indeed the man of the nation; and the nation spontaneously proclaimed the fact. And when later on the popular

will shall have placed into his hands the destinies of France, to those who would attempt to deny the genuineness of the mission we would reply, "Consult the report of the elections of the 6th June." And we might add, "Refer to the election of the 17th September." On that day some fresh partial elections took place, and the heir to the imperial crown was once more elected, without his having, any more than on the first occasion, solicited the suffrages. But this time there were six departments that chose him as their representative. That day the evidence had to be accepted as conclusive. The country was going eagerly towards Louis Napoleon. The nation forced the resistance of the Prince, and in spite of the powers, in spite of the Chamber, she drew him from his exile, to signify, within the permitted limit, her wish to confide her destinies to him, and to recover her tranquillity under his authority. Hence we take this revelation at its origin; we shall watch its development; and when we have to speak of the 2nd December, it will be to present it in its true light—to show it as an act of submission to this same national will of which the 6th June and the 17th September, 1848, were the first and signal manifestations.

CHAPTER II.

THE ELECTION OF THE 10TH DECEMBER.

The voting of the Constitution of 1848.—The candidates for the Presidency of the Republic.—General Cavaignac, MM. de Lamartine, Raspail, and Ledru-Rollin, Republican candidates. — General Changarnier, M. Thiers, Marshal Bugeaud, Prince Louis Napoleon, candidates of the Counter-Revolution.—The attitude and character of the Prince.—The leaders of the old dynastic parties rally round his candidature.—His manifesto to the French people.—Unsuccessful efforts of the Government to get General Cavaignac elected.—France on the 10th December.—Results of the elections.—Their consequences.

THE men of '48 would have willingly prolonged their sway; but the country felt tired of this Provisional Government, and although the election of a President of the Republic was but the confirmation of the Republican form itself, the nation regarded it as a way out of the blind alley in which she felt herself floundering. It was the possible opportunity for making known her preferences, for asserting her wishes. Hence the election was looked forward to with a genuine impatience. The Government and the Assembly could not pretend

to ignore this pressure of opinion; they were therefore compelled to hurry the debates on the Constitution. The 4th November, 1848, this Constitution was voted, and the election of the President of the Republic was fixed for the 10th December following.

Long before the fixing of this date the electoral excitement had spread over the country. The Republican candidate had not to be looked for; it was General Cavaignac. He was already in possession of the public power; he had shown himself to be a man of worth and endowed with the capacities to govern; he had gained the respect of honest people. A candidate like this increased the Republican chances, because he attracted many wavering Conservatives who saw no danger in trying the experiment of a republic, safeguarded by his authority. But the Mountain* could not forget the firmness he had shown in the suppression of the June revolt; they could not accept "their executioner," as they styled him. They resolved to carry their votes upon another candidate—without, however, expecting aught else from this attempt than a mere census of their own adherents.

Some partisans of M. de Lamartine had, indeed,

The section of the most resolute and fanatical democrats. —
Translator.

endeavoured to bring his name forward. But the illustrious poet was "a fallen grandeur;" he was not sufficiently advanced to command the whole of the suffrages of the intransigents. In February he had caused the red flag—the symbol of the fanatical republicans—to be removed; he personified the comparatively moderate shade in the Provisional Government; he was a Girondin, and the extreme party wanted at least a Jacobin for their ensign. The idea of M. de Lamartine's candidature was dismissed.

Old Raspail would have been the favourite candidate of the Mountain. The record of his services as a conspirator and a revolutionary left nothing to desire. It is true he had been educated as a priest; from a scholar at the seminary at Carpentras he had become a teacher; but this error of his youth had been largely condoned by the pledges which in a riper age he had given to democracy. A hero of the Revolution of July, afterwards condemned for political offences, he had under the Government of 1830 suffered a long term of imprisonment. The first to arrive at the Hôtel de Ville in 1848, he had been the first also to proclaim the Republic. Finally, Paris had elected him as one of her representatives in September, 1848. Assuredly this was respectable ballast enough,

even for the Republicans *de la veille* ; accordingly, he was their favourite.

But if M. de Lamartine was found to be too pale, Raspail was found to be too highly coloured, and with his reputation an ignominious defeat was an almost foregone conclusion. Then was started the candidature of Ledru-Rollin. In the Government of February Ledru-Rollin had represented the advanced party ; he had always shown himself the talented champion of democracy. His name was not so great a stumbling-block as that of Raspail ; it emphasized more than that of M. de Lamartine the Republican preference ; hence Ledru-Rollin became the candidate of the Mountain.

The Conservative party was likewise unable to make up its mind. The name that seemed to embody the popular preference was undoubtedly that of Louis Napoleon ; but the name provoked a somewhat lively repugnance among the *bourgeoisie* in general and that of Paris in particular, not to mention the political world. With many his past evoked some serious apprehensions ; others felt that the future under his guidance might disappoint their fondest hopes. Nevertheless, each day brought more and more to light the fact that around the name of Louis Napoleon the largest battalions of universal suffrage were grouped.

The politic-mongers who felt a persistent repugnance to accept the candidature of Louis Napoleon continued to gauge public opinion with the hope to communicate this repugnance first, to convert it to their own choice afterwards. The name of General Changarnier was the first to be put forward. He had greatly distinguished himself in the African campaigns. He was the commander-in-chief of the Paris National Guard, and the title was a passport to the sympathy and confidence of the *bourgeoisie*. But what were the opinions of General Changarnier? It was known that he was not a Republican; was he then a Legitimist or an Orleanist? No one was able to predict; he had carefully abstained from expressing a preference. Belonging to no party, having no antecedents, nor being made of the stuff out of which the man of ideas is cut, he failed to start a current of opinion upon his personality. His candidature was dismissed.

General Changarnier being put aside, M. Thiers was thought of—or rather M. Thiers made himself thought of. His name was already famous. He had occupied a seat in several of the councils of Louis Philippe; his speeches and his books had made a great noise; he was incontestably one of the foremost political men of that period. What his name most ap-

parently represented, though, was the revolutionary idea. The recollection of his grand feats of 1830 and 1848 was scarcely effaced by his acts of recent and too short-lived repentance. To take to extinguish a fire the very man who had kindled the flames was assuredly a contradiction that would arouse a great deal of resistance; it was a kind of subtlety that would scarcely be relished by the electoral masses. The candidature of M. Thiers was abandoned, as that of General Changarnier had been.

Up till now we have purposely omitted to rank Marshal Bugeaud amongst the number of candidates of the Conservative party. He was the first to be solicited, but his sound sense had long beforehand determined the chances of the election. He declined all candidateship and declared himself ready to support Louis Napoleon. Hence Marshal Bugeaud was at no moment of the contest a candidate for the Presidency.

It was misjudging the conditions of the forthcoming election to imagine that it could be influenced in a decisive manner by the means ordinarily employed—such as committees, local influences, or even the press itself, however powerful it might have become. The election of the Chief of the State could only be the result of a political current. And such currents only make themselves felt under ex-

ceptional circumstances. Only powerful sentiments and considerations of supreme interest can produce them; neither the tactics of party nor their efforts are capable of calling them forth. A current is the sprouting of the same sentiment spontaneously felt by a whole nation, a sentiment which simultaneously takes hold of individualities and takes them one by one to make them into a bundle. A powerful idea, an important fact, an immense disaster, a brilliant success, glory above all, may, in a generous nation, determine a current. In a country like France, where the imagination and enthusiasm often take the place of reason, a current may very quickly supervene, and supervene for the benefit of evil as easily as for good. If this current really exists it defies everything: no power stops it. This truth, which our modern commotions have transformed into an axiom, was wilfully ignored by the leaders of the old parties when they took General Changarnier and M. Thiers by the hand. All the tactics, all the intrigue combined for the profit of one of them only, could only result in a deplorable defeat. Neither one nor the other had in their lives accomplished such feats as constitute titles to glory. Neither one nor the other symbolized an idea easily perceptible to the nation at large. No current could establish itself on either of those names. This

favour was reserved to Louis Napoleon only. The origin of his dynasty was glory, his own most apparent significance the restoration of a monarchical régime—the return of the Empire. The hope he embodied was resumed in one word—deliverance.

But what of the objections the Legitimists and Orleanists might raise to such a candidature? They did not deem it prudent or possible to engage upon the struggle for their own direct benefit; what they wanted was to prevent the consolidation of the Republic and at the same time to reserve the future to themselves. Hence it was, avoiding the election of General Cavaignac, to find a candidate who, according to public opinion, had sufficient power to contend with advantage with him. Doubt was no longer possible: the Prince was the candidate *par excellence*. But was not the future which those monarchists dreamed compromised with him?

If the name of Napoleon was a power, it was at the same time a peril: what would the future bring forth at the hands of the Prince if he became Chief of the State? If those same monarchists wanted the overthrow of General Cavaignac, and that of the Republic with his, they would by no means serve as stepping-stones to a President who might found a dynastic race; to a pretender who might by his merits, his abilities, and the authority he

would take over the country, substitute a crown one day for his temporary power.

Through his origin and his aspirations Napoleon was no doubt a pretender; but did a careful examination of his situation as a whole really confirm the apprehensions his name might awaken? Would the country see the material of a sovereign in him? Had the Prince the qualities requisite to the conquest of the supreme rank? Would the power in his hands become a condition of strength and a lever favourable to his designs? Or would he be an ignominious failure perhaps, who would prove the very ruin of those ambitions by which he was supposed to be moved? Those were the questions the leaders of the various parties asked themselves. The prevailing impression which M. Thiers contributed to render acceptable was this: the Prince is an honest man, inclined to make himself illusions much nearer dreamland than reality. Brought up in exile, a stranger to the habits and temper of the country, he has none of the qualities necessary to wield authority. He is ignorant of the science of government; hence he will be obliged to defer to the experience of those who do know. He seems amenable to advice, and therefore may be easily influenced. To resume, he seems made to submit rather than to resist. One

may make a tool of him; there is no fear of his getting the upper hand.

Whether the Prince wished it or not, whether it was on his part calculation, or simply the result of his temperament left to its own devices, certain is it that his intercourse with the political men of the time confirmed rather than dispelled the illusions they had made themselves with regard to him. His ways were exceedingly modest, almost amounting to shyness. Most often he preferred to listen, and always with an encouraging smile. The melancholy expression of his face justified the supposition of his political ingenuousness, of indifference rather than resolve. He appeared to learn from the commerce of others; in reality he observed and initiated himself to a part in which everything was new to him. If a Nestor of the old parties attempted to assume an air of patronage or superiority, he appeared not to notice it. He only saw what he wished to see; he did not submit, he simply eluded. The attempt to gauge his feelings, to ascertain his views upon a piece of given advice or proffered opinion, was met by absolute silence, if he so willed it; to insist was merely to elicit an invariable commonplace instead of a pertinent answer. But his gentleness and kindness forbade all such persistency. Not but what, when he thought fit, he

could resume his position of prince, of the son of a king and the heir to a great throne; but it was done without an effort that could be detected by the most practised eye. His nature served him marvellously in such instances; for if necessary, he could magnify himself without being suspected of the least attempt at haughtiness. The deference he showed to the prominent men with whom he came in contact made each of them believe that he was on the Prince's part an object of personal preference. This was truly the impression brought away from their interviews with Louis Napoleon by the notables of the day—MM. Thiers, Molé, Changarnier, being the first among them. They left the Prince with the belief of having made a decided impression on his mind, and of having won his friendship and his confidence. In their subsequent intercourse with him this was at once the cause of their weakness and the reason of his strength.

With the most presumptuous of this political Pleiad the Prince was for a long while a man of little consequence. To those who observed more closely he remained an enigma. Few persons, indeed, would dare to pretend that from the beginning they penetrated this impenetrable nature; even many of those who later on lived within his imme-

diately present only succeeded in forming an incomplete estimate of him. Time, greatness, the considerable movement of which the Prince when Emperor became the centre, modified to no appreciable degree either his first demeanour or his character itself. His education, already a solid one, was completed by the observance of men and things; the manifestations of his mind took a character of loftiness that became genuine eloquence; his proclamations, his speeches from the throne, always his personal work, showed in him the deep thinker and the philosophical statesman. His imagination suffered nothing from the effects of age; it remained his principal stumbling-block; it is to the too exclusive sway of this faculty, to the exaggerated worship of those inspirations that emanated from it, that must be attributed the greatest errors of his reign. He ever preserved his dislike of advice and control; and if, notwithstanding his instinctive tendency to resist domination, he ended by yielding to some of the most pernicious of all, the fact must be ascribed to the exceeding cleverness of those who gained the ascendancy, or, to speak correctly, to the unscrupulous use of those means which too often prove infallible near the throne—adulation and praise.

Whether as President or Emperor, Louis Napoleon

never departed from his gentleness, kindness, and, above all, generousness, the latter of which remained the salient trait of his character. Neither did he rid himself of his indifference; and the obstinacy often met with in him never became, to speak truly, this real firmness with which it has pleased the world to credit him. We shall see later on that if those lofty qualities were not habitual to his mind, he could command them on solemn occasions. In grave contingencies one could but admire his steadfastness and complete possession of self. The hour of supreme danger, when confronted with death, found him impassive and brave to the verge of disdain. History will not place this figure in the ordinary ranks. If she be severe with regard to some of the acts—which we will not forestall—of the Prince whom we shall see become the Emperor Napoleon III., she will assuredly not refuse her homage to the grand sides of his character. She will take into account the times, the tangled difficulties amidst which Louis Napoleon began, continued, and ended his reign; and she will not be able to gainsay the undeniable truth that from 1849 to 1870 France enjoyed through him twenty years of prosperity.

One is bound to praise the clear-sightedness of those who were able to perceive this happy horizon

amidst the darkness of this troubled epoch of 1848. It was the presentiment of this perspective that rallied round the candidature of the Prince all the honest men who placed the love of country, the determination to save it, above the interest of party. Various calculations, considerations of all kinds, but above all the impulse that revealed itself throughout the land, soon ended by placing the name of Louis Napoleon beyond all possible discussion. The leaders of the old monarchical parties understood this; and to avoid being dragged in the wake of this immense movement of opinion, they graciously resolved to claim its direction, and openly placed themselves at its head. The election of the Prince would have been just as certain without them, for the masses applauded his very name; but it would be ungrateful not to acknowledge that the support of the monarchist leaders contributed to the increase of the majority. As the election drew near they showed themselves more and more assiduous with the Prince—MM. Berryer, Molé, and Thiers especially. The moment was come for Louis Napoleon to address himself to the nation. A manifesto was necessary to fix the exact conditions under which his candidature should be put forward. From that day date the first clouds between Louis Napoleon

and the leaders of the majority in the Assembly. Without being sufficiently guarded, perhaps, they had applied themselves to suggest to the Prince first the language he should hold to the nation, then from advice in general it had come to the formulating of terms in particular. In this group of high notabilities, each one deemed himself authorized to hand the Prince a draft of a manifesto. The Prince accepted those communications with a kindly smile, which obviated words that could be used against him. This silence of Louis Napoleon did not fail to awaken certain apprehensions in the minds of his new counsellors. The moment for the publication of the manifesto drew near. At last came the day when Louis Napoleon convoked those men, illustrious in their various ways, who for some time had grouped themselves around him. Among them were MM. Thiers, Barrot, Berryer, and Molé.

Numerically small as was this meeting, the importance of the questions to be discussed lent it a character of solemnity. Every one was anxious to hear the reading of the document by the Prince. But its very first words must have been a disappointment to those who had given themselves the trouble to elaborate a draft of a manifesto. Long before the advice they had so lavishly tendered,

the Prince's manifesto had been ready. It was his exclusive personal performance. It resumed his ideas and his tendencies, it asserted his will; and we shall see that by the loftiness of its language it already gave the measure of his worth both as a politician and a writer.

The manifesto was worded as follows :—

“LOUIS NAPOLEON TO HIS FELLOW CITIZENS.

“In order to recall me from exile you have named me representative of the people; on the eve of electing a Chief Magistrate of the Republic my name presents itself to you as a symbol of order and security.

“Those proofs of so honourable a confidence are, I am well aware, addressed to my name rather than to myself, who, as yet, have done nothing for my country; but the more the memory of the Emperor protects me and inspires your suffrages, the more I feel compelled to acquaint you with my sentiments and principles. There must be no equivocation between us.

“I am moved by no ambition which dreams one day of the Empire and war, the next of the application of subversive theories. Brought up in free countries, schooled in the school of misfortune, I shall ever remain faithful to the duties which your

suffrages and the will of the Assembly impose upon me.

“If elected President, I shall shrink from no danger, from no sacrifice to defend society, so audaciously assailed. I shall devote myself wholly, without afterthought, to the consolidation of a Republic prudent through its laws, honest by its aims, great and strong from its deeds. My greatest honour would be to hand, after four years of office, to my successor the public power consolidated, its liberties intact, and a genuine progress accomplished.

“Whatsoever the result of the election, I shall submit to the will of the nation. My support is assured beforehand to any just and strong Government which shall bring back order to the public mind as well as to public affairs; which shall efficaciously protect religion, family institutions, and the interests of property—the three eternal bases of the social state; which shall invite all possible reform, appease hatreds, reconcile party feeling, and thus permit our anxious fatherland to look forward to a morrow.

“To bring back order is to re-establish confidence; to provide by credit for the temporary insufficiency of our resources is to restore financial prosperity.

“To protect religion and the family institutions

is to guarantee liberty of worship and liberty of education.

“To protect property is to maintain inviolable the product of all labour ; it is to guarantee the independence and security of ownership, the indispensable foundations of civil liberty.

“With regard to possible reforms, the following appear to me to be the most urgent.

“To admit all retrenchment which, without disturbing the efficiency of public administration, will allow of the remission of the most burthensome taxes on the nation ; to encourage all such enterprises which by the development of the resources of agriculture may in France and in Algeria provide labour to those who lack it ; to provide for the old age of the working classes by provident institutions ; to introduce into our industrial laws such improvements as may tend, not to ruin the rich for the benefit of the poor, but to found the welfare of each on the prosperity of all.

“To confine within just limits the number of situations in the gift of the State, and which often transforms a free people into a nation of petitioners ; to avoid the disastrous tendency which impels the State to undertake to do herself what private enterprise would do as well, if not better. Centralisation of interests and enterprise is in the

nature of despotism. The nature of the Republic rejects monopoly.

“ Finally, to preserve the liberty of the press from the two excesses which most often compromise it, arbitrariness and its own licence.

“ With war there would be no hope of alleviating our maladies; peace must therefore be the fondest of our desires. France during her first Revolution was aggressive because she was compelled to it. Invasion was replied to by conquest. To-day, when no one provokes her, she can devote her resources to pacific improvements, without renouncing a firm and loyal policy. A great nation should keep silent, or never speak in vain.

“ Concern for the national honour means concern for the army, the patriotism of which has so often been overlooked. We must, while maintaining the fundamental laws which are the strength of our military organisation, lighten and not aggravate the burden of the conscription. We must take care of the present and of the future—not only of the officer, but also of the non-commissioned officer and the soldier, and provide an assured existence for those who have served long and faithfully with the colours.

“ The Republic should be generous and have faith in its future; therefore I, who have known cap-

tivity and exile, I eagerly look forward to the day when the fatherland shall be able without danger to put a stop to all proscription, and to efface the last traces of our civil discords.

“Those, dear fellow-citizens, are the ideas I shall bring to the exercise of power, if you call me to the Presidency of the Republic.

“The task is a difficult one, I know; but I do not despair to accomplish it, by calling to my aid, without distinction of party, the men whose high intelligence and probity have already pointed them out to public opinion.

“Besides, when one has the honour to be at the head of the French nation, there is an infallible means of doing that which is right: it is to will it.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.”

The reading of the manifesto had been listened to with a religious silence; it had aroused a genuine surprise, and disclosed some wholly new horizons. The Prince was indeed a man, a profound thinker, an able politician—there could be no doubt of it any longer; and the illusions of M. Thiers had taken flight one by one at every word he had heard.

Deeply convinced as was Louis Napoleon of the value of his doctrines, of the excellence of his

language, he was the first to invite discussion. He went, as it were, to meet criticism and suggestion, with the firm intention to profit by them if he judged them well-founded. The matter of the address only elicited some short observations, and they partook of the nature of reservation rather than of criticism. Its style was unanimously approved. "A few words," it was timidly suggested, "might with advantage be replaced by others." They were deferentially pointed out. The Prince defended his expressions, courteously but with firmness; he explained their sense and import; and the objectors ended by agreeing with him.

One word, however, had greater honours of discussion bestowed upon it than it deserved. It was the word "besides," the first of the last paragraph. His hearers advised the Prince to suppress the word "Besides," which was considered useless, while it was condemned as ungrammatical. But the Prince stuck to his word; he explained its opportuneness; and finally he folded up his manifesto, as a hint that the discussion was at an end. The conventional congratulations, and a few words on general matters, concluded the meeting. The next morning the manifesto was placarded on every wall of Paris.

It was the self-same one Louis Napoleon had read the day before, and the word "Besides" had kept its place.*

We shall meet with little contradiction from those who can carry back their recollections to the period alluded to, when we say that the appeal of the Prince to the nation produced a favourable effect. It accelerated the course of this irresistible current that carried the Prince to power.

The 10th December the French nation proceeded to the urns. It was not an election, it was an immense acclamation of Louis Napoleon. And still the army of public functionaries were at their posts; they stood the onslaught with dauntless courage. Prefects, sub-prefects, agents of all sorts, showed the most ardent zeal. Both verbal and written instructions were multiplied. It was the display of the tactics of official candidature in all its rigour in favour of General Cavaignac. The Assembly itself shared in this movement; the majority of its members launched upon a most active propaganda in the provinces. They vied with one another in singing the praises of the Chief of the Executive; and, truth to tell, it was an easy task, for he was worthy of them. But we have already said that a

* All the details of the meeting described above are rigorously exact; they were given us, many years ago already, by one of the personages who was present at the meeting.

struggle becomes impossible against a current of opinion. The current was with Louis Napoleon. Whole communes marched to the polls, headed by flags and drums, to the cries of "Vive Napoléon !" and "Vive l'Empereur." Fireworks had been prepared in view of the certain success.

The result of the voting was as follows :—

Votes polled	7,317,344
Louis Napoleon	5,434,226
General Cavaignac	1,448,107
Ledru-Rollin	370,119
Raspail	36,920
General Changarnier	4,790
Lost votes	12,600

The result caused a profound impression both in France and throughout Europe. The figures and the conditions of the contest were the subjects of the most natural comment. France was offering the spectacle of an imposing and conclusive manifestation. Confronted with a Government that wanted to impose upon the country both the republican form and the election as Chief of the Republic of him who was already at its head, the nation, proud of its rights, arose almost like one man, and, boldly shaking off the bonds with which it was sought to fetter her, she rejected the candidate whose name implied the confirmation of the Republic, and preferred to him a Prince, the

hereditary chief of a French dynasty, to emphasize her tendencies more energetically, as it were. To perceive the whole monarchical significance of this vote one should remember that this election had not been engaged in as a question of persons, but had been exclusively put forth as a test of principles. Nor should it be forgotten who was General Cavaignac, the then head of the Executive, the candidate for the Presidency of the Republic rejected by the vote of the 10th December. Besides having in his favour all the influence of the possession of authority, he, as it were, compelled the confidence of the country by his prudence and his honour, by his lofty probity, and by the pledges he had given to the party of order in those terrible June days. The Prince who was preferred to him was unknown to the country. If he had in his favour the legendary memory of the founder of his house, he had at the same time against him the hazardous attempts of Strasburg and Boulogne. Therefore, what the country really wanted on this 10th December, when she raised Prince Louis Napoleon to power, was to condemn the Republic, a year's experience of which had already sufficed to show its dangers, and to assert by an ingenious device, within the measure of her rights, her desire for a monarchical restoration.

CHAPTER III.

THE EARLY TIMES OF THE PRESIDENCY.

Formation of the Ministry of the 20th December.—M. Odilon Barrot and the new Ministers.—A glance at the Chamber.—The events of the 29th January, their causes and their warnings.—The Râteau proposal for the dissolution of the Chamber.—Attitude of the Army and the Population towards the Prince.—Aspect of the Elysée.—Assiduities of General Changarnier.—Letter to General Oudinot.—M. Léon Faucher's Message to the Prefects.—Fall of the Home Minister.—The Constituent Assembly dissolves.

THE deep impression produced throughout the whole of France by the election of the 10th December might have led one to believe for a moment in the final pacification of the country. There was some appeasement no doubt, but it was by no means real stability. Between those parties who wanted, as the last word of the Revolution, the triumph of their cause, there was not peace, but merely a truce.

During the early days of the Presidency every one, in fact, seemed determined to avoid irritating subjects. General Cavaignac—save in one instance, to be regretted for his own dignity—nobly supported

his defeat, and for some time his most devoted friends imitated his reserve.* No serious obstacle seemed to present itself to the new President of the Republic.

The first important act to be accomplished by Louis Napoleon after his accession to power was the formation of his Ministry. From the moment that the first known results of the poll of the 10th December had foreshown the final upshot, negotiations to that effect had been started. They were pursued with different views. The Prince had his own combinations; the leaders of the old parties had theirs. The Prince gracefully yielded to cir-

* The incident to which we allude is this. The day that Louis Napoleon took the oath as President of the Republic in the Chamber, he went straight from the tribune towards General Cavaignac and offered him his hand, which the General refused. The majority of the Assembly was as painfully impressed by this want of courtesy as they admired the Prince for his graceful demeanour towards the vanquished opponent of the 10th December.

A pendant to the above picture. The year that the Prince Imperial presided at the distribution of prizes at the general competition at the Sorbonne, Godefroi Cavaignac, the son of the General, and at present one of the most distinguished members of the Lower Chamber, had a prize for Latin poetry. The son of the vanquished refused to accept his reward at the hands of the son of the victor. The ardent youth of the Sorbonne gave an ovation to the heir of the proscribed hero of the 2nd December. The Court was at Fontainebleau when the news of what had happened at the Sorbonne arrived. The Empress became hysterical, and was obliged to leave the reception-rooms.—*Translator.*

cumstances, and consented to take some of his Ministers from among the men of the past; but he wished the majority of the Cabinet to be sympathetic with his cause and to accept his ideas of government.

The politicians by profession, on the contrary, only dreamt of profiting by what they deluded themselves into believing their own victory; they sought to establish near the Prince a council of *surveillance*, rather than a council of Ministers. This first Cabinet was by no means easy of formation. The leaders of the old parties, and especially the Orleanists, notwithstanding the important part they had played in the Constituent Assembly, notwithstanding the authority they had acquired in it, had not succeeded in obliterating their share in the Government that had just been overthrown. Hence their call to public power would have been considered inopportune. The wisest course, therefore, was to provide them with under-studies,* by selecting some new men as their adjuncts, and to

* The term is a purely theatrical one, and as such the author intended it. In many of the Paris theatres a rôle is often given to a principal actor because it comes within "his line of business," though he may not be fit for the character. In such cases a new man is selected to "under-study" him, in view of a contingency, which seldom fails to occur. The great actor throws up the part, and the *débutant* takes his place.—*Translator*.

seek to place at their head an important name not too compromised by its past.

The Prince was rather happily inspired when he addressed himself to M. Odilon Barrot to confide him this trust. In 1848 M. Odilon Barrot had remained at an equal distance from the Government of July, which he had not been able to save after he had prepared its fall, and from the Revolution of which he had been one of the unconscious promoters. Liberal, and in advance of his time, he might succeed in not arousing apprehension among the moderate Republicans of the Chamber. The old parties, holding his name in respect, accepted it with favour. He was a good debater besides, and might efficiently support the policy which the Prince was about to inaugurate. His appearance carried authority with it, he carried sufficient political ballast; the choice was almost a matter of course. The Prince and his kindred had had with the family of M. Barrot and with himself some anterior relations. M. Odilon Barrot was to have defended Louis Napoleon in the Strasburg trials; and his brother, M. Ferdinand Barrot, had been one of the three advocates of the Pretender in the Boulogne trials before the Court of Peers. The Prince liked M. Odilon Barrot, and accorded him such a measure of confidence as he was capable of

giving. M. Odilon Barrot succeeded in forming a Cabinet, which was accepted by public opinion and which offended no susceptibilities in the Assembly. The Cabinet was composed as follows :—

MM. ODILON BARROT, Minister of Justice and President of the Council in the absence of the Prince.

DROUYN DE LHUYS, Foreign Affairs.

DE FALLOUX, Public Instruction and Worship.

DE MALLEVILLE, Interior.

BIXIO, Agriculture and Commerce.

LÉON FAUCHER, Public Works.

General RUHLIÈRE, War.

DE TRACY, Marine.

PASSY, Finances.

All the moderate shades of the Assembly were represented in this Ministry. But within a few days of its formation, and in consequence of an incident of slight importance, it underwent a modification. M. Léon Faucher was appointed to the Interior, M. Lacrosse to Public Works, and M. Buffet to Commerce. But this change of persons involved no change of policy, which remained one of waiting and conciliation. The election of the 10th December necessarily produced certain modifications in the minds of the members of the Assembly. The success of Louis Napoleon had, in

fact, rallied to his cause many well-intentioned men, who, while they had considered the choice of General Changarnier preferable to any other, perceived the possibility of the welfare of the country with Louis Napoleon, and graciously accepted the verdict of the nation. To those were added the ambitious of the new generation who hailed the rising sun, and, we may say, the majority of the moderate men of the various Conservative shades. Those different elements did not, however, form a compact majority in the Assembly. The Prince could only command a majority on questions that presented a marked interest to the cause of order. To desert the Government on such grounds would have exposed this majority to the censure of public opinion. Outside those major causes the Chamber made the Prince feel its determination not to yield to his will. Sometimes it went beyond this, and assumed a distinct attitude of hostility towards him.

An incident threatened one day to compromise this very doubtful understanding. The Mobile Guard, created in a troublous moment as a revolutionary expedient, was fast becoming a danger to public security. The Government had decided upon disbanding this altogether transitory anomaly, and the project had been laid before the Assembly.

The measure naturally caused a great deal of excitement among this young militia; certain agitators had not scrupled to discount their angry feelings, and it was evident that complications would arise.

And, in fact, the reports that reached the Prefecture of Police became very alarming. During the night the secret societies had not suspended their sittings; the leaders had scoured the faubourgs; proclamations had been prepared to call the restless population of Paris to arms. An organized resistance was being prepared. Warned in time, the Government had taken energetic measures. General Changarnier kept some imposing forces in readiness. The insurrection was defeated beforehand; their leaders had sense enough to understand it. Discretion proved the better part of valour; the projected uprising was adjourned till a more favourable opportunity.

If this so-called day of the 29th January had demonstrated to what extent insurrectionary organisation was still alive, it had been also the occasion for a veritable ovation to the Prince. While reviewing the troops concentrated in the vicinity of the Place de la Concorde and the Tuileries, he had been received with the most enthusiastic cheers by the army and the people. Such a cordial reception, joined to certain rumours of a *Coup d'État*,

had caused great uneasiness in the Chamber, which for a moment felt its security threatened. Some misunderstandings with General Changarnier still further increased its suspicions, and it assumed an attitude which foreshadowed a conflict. Happily, the Ministry had a certain prestige with the representatives. It was known that it would not lend itself to a *Coup d'État*. Its assurances were accepted with confidence, and the storm was averted. But the preoccupations which had swayed the Chamber left their traces nevertheless; henceforth betwixt the Prince and Parliament one could only expect a kind of tacit understanding; a cordial sympathy was beyond hope.

Nevertheless, how very desirable was this sympathy between the great powers of the State. The 29th January had sufficiently shown that the insurgents of June, 1848, clung to their hopes and to their organisation. The Minister of the Interior had put his hand upon a widespread plot which, under cover of a society called "*La Solidarité Républicaine*," extended its ramifications throughout the whole of France. The future appeared once more in the most sombre colours. Public opinion did not underrate those perils, and saw not without anxiety the growing antagonism between the Prince and the Assembly. It was easy to foresee

from the impressions that prevailed, that the time was near at hand when the country would loudly proclaim her preferences, and take sides against the expiring Assembly with the Chief of the State she had just elected.

The Assembly, elected with constituent powers, had accomplished its task: it had framed and promulgated a new Constitution; it had evidently reached the term of its mission. The question of its dissolution was discussed in high political regions; the country was not slow to seize the hint offered her, and to show the Chamber her ill-will. In a few days a movement sprang up on this question of dissolution. From all parts of the country the Chamber was summoned to dissolve. The petitions grew apace. Councils-General, Municipal Councils clamoured equally loud; and the current assumed a character so intense and unanimous that the motion to dissolve the Chamber followed very quickly. It was M. Râteau who took the opportune initiative; and, after some hesitation, the Chamber decided to fix the 13th May for the expiration of its mission.

The Prince perceived without regret the attitude, guarded at first, then hostile, of the majority; he felt that this resistance to the preference thus clearly manifested by the participants of universal

suffrage could only increase his popularity, the existence of which he had already had many opportunities of proving. At his first review of the Army of Paris the cries of "Vive Napoléon!" and "Vive l'Empereur!" had greeted him on his passage; the population and the army thus mingled their eager welcome. The few cries of "Vive la République!" were immediately drowned by an increase of enthusiasm on the other side. It was evident that the Prince-President had might on his side. A few days had enabled him to command the situation. Not that he had made an effort in that direction, or performed one single act or shown any unexpected capacities. It was merely the steady progress of events, the natural sequel to the same movement that had produced the "Tenth December." The nation wanted a Chief, she had found him; she wanted order, the Prince was its guarantee; she wanted to get rid of the Republic, and she saw in Louis Napoleon the personification of a monarchical régime. Never was a situation more clearly defined and more clearly understood; never was a will more clearly formulated by the immense majority of the country.

If the Assembly withheld its support, the most important men did not grudge their co-operation. Whatever the sentiment that animated them, they

were most assiduous in their attendance at the Elysée. M. Molé, M. Thiers, M. Berryer, General Changarnier had frequent and long interviews with the Prince. The upper world of politics crowded the drawing-rooms of the Chief of the State. The Republican element had, as it were, rendered themselves justice by gradually withdrawing from the receptions of the Prince. They were replaced by the great names of the Faubourg St. Germain, who since 1830 had held aloof from the Government, and who felt a certain satisfaction, mixed with curiosity, to re-enter the precincts of power. Besides, the Elysée was as yet neutral ground; one might be seen on it without effacing one shred of one's colours. Thanks to this mixture of notable individualities from all parties and all sources—from the diplomatic and financial worlds, from the army and the clergy, from the magistracy and the great bodies of the State—the Republican perfume evaporated altogether.

The aspect of the Elysée was that of a Court, and the Prince in his turn naturally assumed the demeanour of a sovereign. It was felt that he was destined to become one within a short delay, and he was unconsciously treated with the respectful deference reserved for crowned heads. Assuredly the Prince had within himself the requisite qualities

to worthily occupy the foremost rank. He was born on the steps of a throne, his early education had been influenced by his august origin. The chances of an election which raised him to the summit of power only placed him in a position analogous to that which his birth had mapped out for him. And besides, if to ordinary natures, a sudden and startling elevation often proves a great trial, it is, on the contrary, to the finer constituted ones a profitable stimulant and the source of precious benefits. To those privileged natures the horizon widens with the appearance of new obligations; the intellect rises to the occasion; the mind supplies its own shortcomings; the effort to overcome the temporary obstacles leaves behind it a durable intellectual gain, and the level that had to be attained is rapidly surpassed. Such was the case with Louis Napoleon: each day showed in him what might be called the progress of his political education; he discharged the official duties of the Government with a genuine facility that already foretold his real aptitude for the foremost place in the State.

There is no Court without courtiers; no axiom is, unfortunately, more rigorously exact. This escort was not wanting to the Prince, and it was recruited from among the most exalted stations themselves. Amongst the most assiduous near

the Prince, General Changarnier showed himself in the foremost rank; certain familiarities of language which the Prince had allowed him to take denoted on the part of the General the eager desire to please. It was very evident at this period that the first place in the State was solidly occupied, that the power was wholly in the hands of the Prince, that he alone was able to bestow a high position. General Changarnier had not been slow to understand this. Under such conditions he could only aim at an increase of dignity. His plan was soon settled. A high military command, that combined the command of the Army of Paris with that of the National Guard, which he already possessed, would give him an exalted position, and make him, after the Prince, the most important personage in the State. It was this position he obtained from the Prince without the latter having sufficiently weighed the power he was about to confide to a man whose character he had by no means solved, whose intentions he had scarcely divined.

General Changarnier multiplied his professions of attachment to the Prince, in whose conflict with the Assembly he openly took the part of the former. The man of authority and of daring already showed himself in the general. More than once he had treated the resolutions of the Assembly

with undisguised contempt. One incident alone reveals the attitude he meant to assume, and which at a given moment he did take up. On the occasion of the siege of Rome by our troops, and of the momentary check our soldiers had suffered, the Prince addressed a letter to General Oudinot, which was both a reply to the hostile clamour of the Mountain and an energetic assertion of personal authority. The letter became an event. General Changarnier emphasized its import still further by having it placarded in every barrack-room, in order to increase the sympathies with which the Prince was already regarded by the army.

The letter was conceived as follows :—

“PARIS, 8th May, 1849.

“My dear General,—

“The telegraphic news which announces the unexpected resistance you have met with under the walls of Rome has deeply grieved me. I hoped, you know, that the inhabitants of Rome would open their eyes to fact, and extend a cordial welcome to an army which came to accomplish a friendly and disinterested mission. It has not been so, and our soldiers were treated as enemies. Our military honour being engaged, I shall not suffer it to receive a slight ; you shall not want for reinforcements. Tell your soldiers that I appreciate their

bravery, that I deeply feel their hardships, and that they may ever depend upon my support and on my gratitude.

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

A letter such as this, and the use made of it by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris, could not fail to arouse a storm in the Assembly. This one, as well as others that had agitated the Chamber under similar conditions, had resulted in a decline of prestige for the Assembly and an increase of importance for the Prince and General Changarnier, who appeared united to defy its expiring authority. Accordingly, the later sittings of the Constituent Assembly had assumed a character of violent hostility. The President of the Republic was insulted by the Mountain. M. Ledru-Rollin demanded his impeachment : he showed the Empire ready to swoop down upon the country ; he openly charged Louis Napoleon and General Changarnier with conspiracy to bring about a *Coup d'État*. The secret societies held themselves in readiness to act upon a sign from the deputies of the Mountain ; they loudly proclaimed their intention to take their revenge, arms in hand, of the vote of the 10th December.

The 12th May, in consequence of a vote of the Chamber on the Roman question, M. Léon Faucher,

Minister of the Interior, resuméd the perils that threatened the country in a message worded as follows :—

“ After a most animated debate on the affairs of Italy, the National Assembly has rejected, by a majority of 329 as against 292, the motion of M. Jules Favre, to declare that the Ministry had lost the confidence of the country. This vote consolidates the public peace; the agitators only awaited a vote hostile to the Ministry to rush to the barricades, and to re-enact the days of June. Paris is quiet.

“ The following have voted against the order of the day, and against the Government.”

(Here follow the names of those who voted against the order of the day.)

The dangers of 1852 appeared already on the horizon.

This revelation profoundly moved the Assembly, and it avenged on M. Léon Faucher the discredit that weighed upon it. The overthrow of the Minister of the Interior was the last important act of this Chamber. The 27th May, 1849, it dissolved; and the next day, the 28th, the Legislative Assembly took its place.

Thus ended the career of this Assembly—born in

a day of trouble, and wrapped in so much darkness that it would have been difficult at its beginnings to exactly foretell its tendencies. Elected under the despotic pressure of a revolutionary power, it had had the courage to manifest its aversion to the Revolution. Its majority was hostile to the Republic ; it had, nevertheless, accepted this form of government. But it had done so out of prudence, in order not to proclaim too hastily its reactionary tendencies—also from a spirit of conciliation, in order not to provoke in her midst divisions that might have exposed the country to the gravest perils. To the majority, the Republic meant a truce, a mere continuation of an interregnum. The future remained open to the hopes of every party ; but this majority had counted without the country, and we have already seen how, on the 10th December, the nation had forced it to do for her what it had not dared to do for itself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE 13TH JUNE, 1849.

Strength of the respective parties in the Legislative Assembly—The consequences of the election of this Chamber.—The events of the 13th June, 1849.—The Members of the Mountain at the Conservatory of Arts and Industry.—The Insurrection checked.—The effect in the Provinces.—The possible consequences of the 13th June.—The tactics of the future enemies of the Empire.

THE elections for the Legislative Assembly were marked by no incident worthy of comment. The party of order showed anew its strength, and the country made manifest once more her antipathy to the Republic. The large centres where the clubs and the press had exercised their evil influence distinguished themselves by their Socialistic votes, but the Mountain only returned to the new Assembly after it had suffered considerable losses.

At the very beginning of the session the various parties had wished to count their forces; they took the opportunity to do so on the occasion of the nomination of a President of the Chamber. Out of 603 votes M. Dupin was elected by 345. This was about the number of Monarchists of all shades.

General de Lamoricière had obtained 76 votes; they were those of the moderate Republicans, the remnants of the old Cavaignac party. M. Ledru-Rollin had united 182 suffrages; they were those of the Mountain, to which were added those of a few advanced Republicans—who did not subscribe, however, to all the doctrines of the former.

Was such an Assembly the confirmation of the vote of the 10th December? Did its election disclose an increase or a decrease of opinion in favour of the Prince? The question had not presented itself to the country in this form; and therefore the country had not to answer it. What was called the party of order united at that time all the monarchical shades, all the enemies of the Revolution. Those various Conservative fractions made common cause against the Republicans, without, perhaps, seriously asking themselves the flag they would adopt to combat the pernicious doctrines of the Republic. The Assembly was the outcome of this accord; the protection of social order was the obvious mission of the new Assembly.

The general belief, however, was that no one more than the Prince had shown and showed himself the energetic defender of the threatened social fabric; and the tacit mission given to almost all the Conservative deputies was this—to support

both the grand principles of order and the Prince-President, who was their natural champion. Only a few Legitimist elections had a different motive: the constituents had given their representatives particular instructions to pursue the restoration of Henri V. But they were the exception; the majority of the Legitimists had not even unfurled their flag in the contest. What were the reasonable expectations from such a Chamber? Undoubtedly an energetic co-operation to repress all attempt at disorder, all physical or moral endeavour on the part of the demagogical element. As for constitutional questions, they could only be brought forward at the risk of immediate dislocation of the majority. The continuance of the provisional arrangement during the whole term of its mission—such, and such only was the painful and enervating prospect the new Assembly offered the country, unless some unforeseen incident came to trouble its existence. It was easy to foresee, though, that the various parties could not condemn themselves to so protracted an inaction. Socialism, above all, was eager to retrieve its successive defeats. The Mountain, which in the Chamber represented its doctrines, its interests, and its passions, was summoned every day by the secret societies and the most ardent demagogues to give the signal for a

call to arms. To decide itself to this it only required a pretext; and this pretext the Mountain imagined to have found in the Roman question.

In consequence of the regrettable negotiations with the leaders of the Roman Revolution, the Government had decided at last to push military operations more actively forward and to attack Rome. Between the Italian revolutionaries, who had driven the Holy Father from his States, and the French revolutionaries the feeling of identity of interests and brotherhood was complete. M. Ledru-Rollin had vehemently opposed in the tribune the policy of the Government on this question, which affected both the interests of French Catholicism and the honour of the national flag. He had appealed to the most burning passions, and threatened the Government to have recourse to arms in order to wrest from it the most dishonourable concessions.

The Government had shown itself firm and resolute, but the Mountain was bound to yield to the pressure of those dangerous auxiliaries from without. M. Ledru-Rollin moved for the impeachment of the President and his Ministers, and at the same time gave the signal for the insurrection. The organs of the demagogic party repeated his call to

arms; and at this double watchword, so eagerly expected, the revolutionary mass set itself in motion, descended the faubourgs, formed itself on the boulevards, and marched in serried columns on the Assembly to dictate to it its laws; or, to speak correctly, to substitute a Government of revolt for a Government legally established.

At the same time the Mountain was to raise the revolt at different points of Paris and to constitute a new Government. The Hôtel de Ville, this time-honoured trysting-place of the disaffected, was too efficiently occupied to afford a hope of being taken; so the Conservatory of Arts and Industry had been chosen as the rallying centre; and it was thither that repaired the deputies of the Mountain, headed by Ledru-Rollin and the leaders of the revolt who intended to impose upon France a new edition of 1848. As always, the National Guards gave their co-operation to the insurrection. Colonel Guimard, who commanded the artillery of the citizen army, had escorted the representatives of the Mountain; barricades had been rapidly thrown up in the streets that led to the Conservatory of Arts and Industry; resistance was in a fair way of organisation, and a few hours more would have sufficed to make it formidable. The following placard was stuck up throughout those quarters

where the insurrection was supposed to meet with sympathisers and adherents :—

“TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE; TO THE NATIONAL
GUARD AND TO THE ARMY.

“The Constitution is being violated, the people are rising to defend it. The Mountain is at its post.

“Vive la République ! Vive la Constitution !”

This appeal was signed by a hundred and twenty of the deputies of the Mountain.

But the Government was on its guard. Measures had been taken. General Changarnier kept some imposing forces in readiness. The column that marched on the Assembly was routed. The Conservatory of Arts and Industry was surrounded by the soldiery, and the barricades that masked it taken at the point of the bayonet.

Then began a veritable stampede. The moment the commissary of police, with the soldiery at his back, entered the apartment where the insurrectionary Government was already deliberating, there was a helter-skelter flight. The doors being guarded, the windows were rushed at; and the chief of the fiasco, Ledru-Rollin himself, was obliged to have recourse to this vulgar means of escape. A few hours had sufficed to defeat this fool-hardy insurrection; but if the most energetic measures had not been taken,

if the army had not shown itself bent upon doing its duty as it did, Paris and the whole of France would have been plunged once more into the horrors of civil war.

In fact, in every part of France the secret societies were on foot; they only awaited the signal to take up arms in their turn, and if they had not learnt the defeat of their chiefs almost at the same moment that they were informed of the girding on of their bucklers, an abominable "Jacquerie"* might have devastated the land. In every great centre, at the selfsame hour that the movement broke out in Paris, and before the tidings of it could have been received, large riotous gatherings took place. The hotels of the prefectures were surrounded by compact and threatening mobs, who demanded communication of the dispatches from Paris, and who evidently held themselves in readiness to take up arms. A note published in the *Patrie*, a semi-official organ, gave a summary of the events that had happened in the provinces. It read as follows:—"It appears now that the plot was to break out the same day in the principal towns of

* The author alludes to the revolt of the peasants against the nobles in May, 1358. Whenever the lower classes have risen in France, historians and essayists have, with or without reason, dubbed the upheaval a "Jacquerie;" which made Victor Hugo say, "Every revolution is produced by the virus of the "Jacquerie."—*Translator*.

France. Well-known agitators had installed themselves *en permanence* and awaited the news from Paris. At Rheims, Dijon, Lyons, and Toulouse attempts at insurrection occurred: the leaders seem to have acted upon instructions from Paris. At Bordeaux, on the 13th, the sections of various secret societies were sitting *en permanence*; the clubs were convoked for the 14th, in the morning. At Rheims, the president of the club went to the sub-prefecture on the 13th and told the sub-prefect that his authority was at an end, the triumph of the Revolution being a foregone conclusion in Paris. Meanwhile, some other agitators went to the Mayor to tell him of the overthrow of the Government. At Toulouse, a similar attempt was made with the same want of success. The news of the instant suppression of the insurrection in Paris has preserved everywhere the same tranquillity."

The whole pointed a retrospective lesson to the defunct Constituent Assembly, who had overthrown a vigilant Minister, M. Léon Faucher, because he had predicted the danger. The Constituent Assembly had wanted to avenge the representatives whom he had singled out as the enemies of society, as the leaders of the revolt. The peril had become a reality, and the members of the

Mountain whom he had named were the leaders of the insurgents.

This appeal to arms had, as it was bound to do, made a deep impression on the National Assembly; every necessary power had been given to the Government, in view of the eventualities that might arise. On the motion of M. Dufaure, who had become Minister of the Interior, the Assembly authorised the proclamation of a state of siege. It professed itself ready for the most energetic measures of repression, but of repression only.

As for the Prince-President, he had been ready throughout to mount his horse if his presence were wanted. He had acted very prudently in not intervening personally at the crucial hour. His presence might have provoked manifestations whence might have sprung sanguinary collisions. But when the rioters had been dispersed, and the street traffic restored, he insisted upon showing himself to the people. He traversed the boulevards and the Rue de Rivoli, at the head of a brilliant staff, and received a most enthusiastic reception. The cries of "Vive Napoléon!" "Vive l'Empereur!" greeted him on his passage. If he had wished it that day, perhaps, the Empire would have been an accomplished fact then and there.

But it was not in this way that Louis Napoleon

intended to arrive at the sovereign dignity. In fact, the question of the restoration of the Empire was already being discussed everywhere. The army, as well as the people, imagined to have made an Emperor on the 10th December, when they raised Louis Napoleon to the foremost rank in the State. Wherever he showed himself in public he was met with the persistent cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" It was not only the people and the army who openly incited the Prince to take the crown. Among the political personages who came in contact with him the wisest inclined to the opinion that the time was ripe to have done with the Republic, and for the Prince to yield to the wish of the immense majority of the nation. Given that the title of President of the Republic must inevitably be changed one day into that of Emperor, they judged it prudent to avoid the parliamentary surprises and complications that might spring up in a new Chamber. It would be, it was argued, a saving of time, of effort, and perhaps of disorder. But the resistance of the Prince was absolute; he showed himself firm. He deemed himself bound to put the Republican form to the test; he knew that on the strength of his name had been built the compromise between various parties; he wished to respect it, and to honestly attempt to save the country, by remaining

within the lawful forms that had been imposed on him. He would eventually admit of more energetic means, but only in the event of his first efforts having proved absolutely powerless. But if on this 13th June the Empire or a life-long power had not been conferred upon the Prince, the question of consolidating the Government had made a vast stride, altogether independent of any act on his part, and simply through the force of circumstances. It was thus that the enemies of the Prince continued to make themselves the most useful auxiliaries of his elevation.

The events of a revolutionary day ever cause a profound emotion to the country; they leave lasting traces from which every interest suffers; they lead to considerations of the motives that have brought on the disturbance, and of the best means to prevent its recurrence. If the day does not result in the victory of those who promoted it, it gravely damages their cause, because it inevitably brings with it a feeling of reaction. This was the logical phenomenon produced in France on the morrow of the 13th June.

We think that the moment has come to resume, in a few words, the warnings of this past which we have rapidly traversed, and the lessons they pointed for the future. After the catastrophe of

February (the overthrow of Louis Philippe), which had increased the strength of the Revolutionaries by profession tenfold, which had enabled them to pursue their organisation with the complicity of the powers first, under the very protection of the law itself afterwards, France from one end to the other was bound, as it were, in a network of anarchical conspiracy: clubs, secret societies, a press absolutely free—those three powerful instruments for the overthrow of any Government that suffers them—pursued, with a terrorising effect, their work of destruction. Terrible revolts had enabled the demagogues to essay their strength, to keep up discipline in their ranks; it was felt that an immense anarchical horde was ready to swoop down upon the country.

This truth, which the enemies of the Empire wanted to deny later on, because it was the justification of the latter, is made but too evident on this day of the 13th June, as it was made evident more than once during the year just ended. And by whom is this truth proclaimed from the tribune? By whom is it pointed out to the country? Who is sufficiently inspired by it to ask exceptional powers of the Chamber? Who deems it sufficiently authoritative to provoke in the Legislature salutary and protective reforms? Those laws that spring from a prudent reaction, who supports them in Parlia-

ment? Who defends them against the Mountain? Who votes and gives them to the country? We have already said it: the very men who later on will deny those dangers. And why this contradiction? Because to recognise and to proclaim the peril on the 13th June was to serve their own cause; to recognise later on this peril increased tenfold was to excuse an enemy, to condone his enterprise, to legitimize his success.

When later we shall describe this grand day of the Second December, when we shall find ourselves confronted by the victors and the vanquished of the 13th June, bound in the closest community of interests to make common cause against us, we shall have the right to ask of them, in the severest terms, an account of so deplorable an alliance and of the motives of such a contradiction.

CHAPTER V.

FALL OF THE ODILON MINISTRY.

Mutual Suspicion.—What the various Parties wanted.—What General Changarnier might have wanted.—The Policy of MM. Dufaure and Odilon Barrot.—The Policy of Louis Napoleon.—His Speeches at Chartres, Ham, Saumur, and Tours.—Did he wish for a *Coup d'État* in 1849?—The Prince-President's Letters.—His Message of the 31st October, 1849.—Fall of the Odilon Barrot Ministry.

IF some clouds had already arisen between the Ministers and the Prince, between the Assembly and the Chief of the State, it would have been thought that the events of the 13th June, the fear of the common enemy, would have dispelled, or at least attenuated, this antagonism between the various forces that might co-operate in the saving of the country. It was exactly the reverse that happened. The Chamber took umbrage at the considerable popularity which had revealed itself in favour of Louis Napoleon; it felt the increase of the Prince's strength, and feared the effects of his power. The Ministers and the leaders of the old parties noticed with some tetchiness the growing

spirit of independence on the part of their elect of the 10th December; suspicions became the rule with all; imprudent expressions were mischievously discounted, and spiteful and petty tactics did not fail to ensue.

The Prince also had his private grudges—not against the Assembly, which he knew to be deeply divided against itself, and powerless to bring about a mutual reconciliation detrimental to his interests; not against his Ministers, whom he had the right to replace the day he thought expedient; but against the prominent political individualities who had not been sufficiently guarded in their attempts at dominion; and, above all, against General Changarnier, who, in consequence of the 13th June, had assumed an exceptional importance. The General had in fact managed to gain the confidence of the army, the confidence of the Paris population, that of the majority of the Assembly, and, above all, that of its principal leaders. Hence he became—and his ill-disguised ambition lent force to the supposition—to some, the possible instrument, always for his own advantage, of resistance to the Prince-President; to others the might-be Monk of a Monarchical restoration. It would be premature to pretend that at this particular time either General Changarnier, the Prince, his Ministers, or the As-

sembly itself, had made up their respective minds as to what they wanted. But if they had not come to any clearly defined resolutions, or taken a firmly determined aim, they had at least disclosed certain unmistakeable tendencies which could not but prove the probable forerunners of the storms whence would issue the hurricane. The Monarchical parties dreamt of the restoration of their Princes; they thought that Louis Napoleon would wear himself out in his attempt at government, and that, with the aid of General Changarnier, a new royalty might spring from a day of disorder. To wait, to continue the provisional arrangement, and to meanwhile harass the Chief of the State—these were their tactics.

General Changarnier dreamt of anything and everything. He first applied himself to the increase of his own importance and popularity, of his influence with the Army and the National Guards, and, above all, to win the confidence of the leaders of the old parties, in order to provide a solid basis for his operations. If once acquired, what use did he propose to make of this power at the opportune moment? That which circumstances should dictate to him. He might restore royalty, and obtain from it the title of *Connétable*, with the honours and profits such a dignity comports, or

he might more naturally assume the Dictatorship on his own account, and remain, in pursuance of some new form to be decided by circumstances, the Chief of the State. To deny those various assertions would be to deny evidence. There is ocular and moral proof for what we assume. The General did not always observe the discretion in his speech which his high station and his more exalted hopes compelled; he gave his confidence without sufficient precaution, and thus caused himself to be very easily unriddled. To flatter one and another in order to induce them to stay on his side, he was often betrayed into saying too much, and his secret was not always strictly kept.

As for the Ministers, who, under a régime as yet more parliamentary than personal, constituted a kind of body in the State, they also had their plans. M. Odilon Barrot and M. Dufaure believed in the possibility of applying the Constitution of 1848. They saw in the practical working of the Republican régime a kind of continuation of the parliamentary government with which they had been bound up for eighteen years; they would have easily consoled themselves for the loss of the fallen Monarchy if they could have met, under a new form, with institutions satisfying their liberal

tendencies. The title given to the Chief of the State was with them but of secondary importance, provided that by his side there existed an elective representation, with a controlling and governing Ministry. On this condition, and with such a guarantee, they would have consented to sacrifice the hereditary principle in the bestowal of supreme power. In one word, they became sincere Constitutional Republicans.

We do them no injustice when we say that they unconsciously yielded to the influence of their aptitudes. Both were men of talent, good debaters, familiar with the procedure of Parliament; but if they combined the gifts that enable men to rule Assemblies, they did not possess, perhaps, in a proportionate degree, the qualities, equally rare, required for the exercise of power more specially dependent upon the Chief of the State. With them parliamentarism was, so to speak, the universal panacea. In this they committed an error, because they did not sufficiently consider the peculiar circumstances of the time.

In those various combinations that exercised the parties and the remarkable individualities at their heads, dynastic preoccupations and personal questions held the foremost place; there was little thought for the wishes of the country, which was

regarded merely as an eventual patrimony. The nation's fear was speculated on, and the conviction prevailed that she would accept any and every solution that guaranteed stability and order.

The Prince allowed the country a larger share of concern in his preoccupations. The direction of his policy was inspired above all by a consideration for the preferences and the interests of the nation. Possessing to a high degree the instinct, as it were, of the nation's wants, he principally aimed at giving her those satisfactions which in his opinion were compatible with the welfare of the country. But according to his ideas the parliamentary régime was inadmissible as a principle of government for France. If he had felt the least reservation about the value of this theory with regard to normal and tranquil times, he also felt that to bring France out of her present troubles the parliamentary régime should at the outset be rigorously put aside. If in a general way there existed in his mind on this doctrine foregone conclusions which swayed him too exclusively, and became at subsequent periods the cause of considerable errors, he was at least in the right with regard to the transitory period in which he was then moving. He intended, above all, to increase and strengthen the principle of authority, and

perhaps at the same time to weaken the power of the Assembly.

No doubt the Prince was the first to profit by this system, seeing that constitutionally he embodied the highest representation of this authority. But if ambition—assuredly not misplaced in the position to which his birth and the unfettered will of the nation had raised him—entered those calculations, patriotism was incontestably their dominant motive.

In carefully observing the situation, he perceived for the moment no one but himself designed to assume the supreme power. As we have said already, the fall of the Orleans dynasty was too recent to admit for one moment the idea of the restoration of one of its princes. M. de Chambord represented, no doubt, long centuries of grandeur, and everything in his principles and person was worthy of sympathy and respect. But his party, however honourable, only found its adherents among the higher spheres of society. It was a staff without soldiers, and public opinion of the moment formulated its urgent democratic needs. M. le Comte de Chambord would never have consented to submit to them, while with Louis Napoleon they formed part and parcel of his programme of government.

Those pretenders put aside, was there a man who possessed the necessary compass to aspire to the foremost rank? If so, who was there that had rendered services sufficiently eminent, whose fame was sufficiently wide-spread, to replace the authority of princely birth and to supply the strength which, rightly or wrongly, is always associated with exalted origin?

Given that no pretender, no serious rival, could dispute this foremost rank with the Prince, that he was eminently the man of the situation, was he not justified then in believing himself entrusted with a providential mission? And if he had this faith—as indeed it possessed his whole soul—if he saw no deliverance for his country except through himself, was he then so very guilty to prepare himself for the accomplishment of his task? was it a crime then to seek to aggrandise his individuality, to prepare it for the destinies of the future, to endeavour to make itself sufficiently strong, sufficiently powerful, that in the hour of peril it might take the upper hand.

Be it personal ambition or more exactly the devotion to his country that inspired the Prince—and we shall be able to show that the two interests were then confounded—it will not be denied that his endeavour to raise the power of which he was

the depositary was an act of opportune and far-seeing policy. To attain his end he sought the opportunity to speak in public: he found it in his messages to the Assembly, in his official communications, in the inauguration of monuments and railways, in the reply to the speeches addressed to him at banquets. His discourses had almost always a direct relation to circumstances; several have been programmes; all showed proofs of an incontestable loftiness of mind; their form was literary, their tendency at once conservative and visibly democratic. Their effect was ever considerable; more than once they rose to the dignity of an event.

The reader has not forgotten the Prince's manifesto at the moment of the election of the 10th December; that was his programme, everything had been said in it. The questions of home and foreign policy, the leading social principles, the problems of economy, everything that could interest religion, property, the army, finance, had been successively the subject of loyal and clearly defined declarations on his part. In his subsequent discourses he had only to insist, according to the surroundings and incidents of the moment, on the maxims which he had made his rule of conduct; to show more and more his justification as Chief of the

State, to vulgarise, as it were, his method of government. In his proclamation to the people on the morrow of the insurrection of the 13th June, he announced his firm determination to conquer anarchy and restore order and security to France. He pronounced these memorable words: "It is time that the good citizen should feel secure once more, that the bad one should begin to fear." He warned the disorderly that he "would shrink at nothing to restore security to the country."

At Chartres the 6th of July, 1849, in recalling the crusade which St. Bernard had preached there, he glorified this great saint "for having raised the worship of things spiritual above the worship of material interest." Religion might, indeed, foresee in this prince its energetic and believing champion.

At Amiens he skilfully evoked the recollection of the Treaty of Amiens to hold out a friendly and pacific hand to England. He showed himself a partisan of alliances that might be useful to France.

At Ham,* in a speech of singular boldness, he took his own captivity as the text for an uncompromising condemnation of the spirit of revolt; he made a public apology in face of the whole of the

* Where he was confined in company with General Montholon and Doctor Conneau from 1840 to 1846. The stone-mason, Badinguet, whose name was ever afterwards bestowed upon Louis Napoleon in derision, and to whom he owed his escape, only died in November, 1882.—*Translator*.

nation as it were, so that it might go forth throughout the land that the impulses of youth had given way to mature reflections and to the submission to authority.

At Angers, in placing himself there, as in every circumstance, under the powerful patronage of his uncle Napoleon I., the name of whom the people loved to hear, and whose memory they fondly expected to see revive in him, he put the country on her guard against the excesses of liberty. While admitting the latter to a share still too great in the government, he claimed the application of a system tending to implant in France—not the savage liberty that permitted every one to do what he chose, but the liberty of civilized nations, permitting every one to do that which could not be hurtful to the community at large.

At Nantes he evinced all his solicitude for commerce and industry by impressing upon its laborious population the new lease of life that would accrue to stagnant trade from the wisdom of parties that would permit the firm revival of order and peace.

At Saumur, at the very gates of the celebrated college that gives us so many valiant officers, he found the noblest expressions to “extol the military spirit, the habits of order, discipline, and graduated superiority, that not only make the good soldier,

but the good citizen also." He justly pointed out these essential virtues as being "in critical times the safeguards of the country. . . . The religion of duty, loyalty to the standard," such was the device he held up to the admiration of the military youth.

At Tours he went with unfaltering hand and equal candour to the very core of the burning questions; he went straight to the apprehensions which the intrigue of parties tried to propagate.

At this period of 1849 the Prince believed sincerely that the country might be saved by the natural working of her institutions, by the loyal application of the Constitution, and by the opportune revision of some of its imprudent provisions. We have already said how after the 10th of December, and again after the 13th June, he had energetically refused to take—or, to speak correctly, to accept—the crown. He considered that the time had come to let in the full light of publicity upon his conduct and his intentions, to defend himself from unjust accusations, to protest against plans which he had not.

France, in fact, had then no need of an 18th Brumaire to set herself free from the perils of a Revolution; the times were not the same. He proved it by appealing to a spirit of conciliation, in

order to prevent such complications as those which had made the 18th Brumaire a necessity. Therefore the Prince acted in good faith, and in the true spirit of the time, when he said—"Our laws may be more or less defective, but they are susceptible of improvement. Therefore trust to the future, without concerning yourselves about *Coups d'État* or insurrections: there is no pretext for the former; the latter stand not the least chance of success."

To those who wished to read between the lines the Prince therefore said: "I give myself wholly to you to govern with the Constitution; but on the condition of a revision which shall give back to France the free exercise of her will, which shall enable her to choose her Chief as she likes, and where she likes, and which shall attempt no violence to her preferences by an iniquitous exclusion or a premeditated ostracism." It was tantamount to a warning.

We must insist upon this declaration at Tours, and again point out its value; because it contains the whole of Louis Napoleon's policy: it absolutely enables one to gauge his thoughts.

And why should he have thought of a *Coup d'État* at this time of 1849, when every legal means was still so logically open to him? Was not the Constitution open to revision? Did not the 11th

Article of it expressly provide for this right? Was it thought likely then, that the Assembly would dare to ignore this necessity when confronted with the manifest pressure of public opinion? And if the Constitution could be thus lawfully revised, if no limit had been marked out by the Legislature, if all its provisions could be discussed anew, might not anything and everything result from this lawful modification of the fundamental contract? Might not the President be declared capable of being re-elected? Might not a prolongation of office be granted to him? Was not a life-presidency a form admissible to and compatible with the Republican doctrine? And to go farther still, even if the country, if the Assembly had wished it, where was the obstacle to the restoration of the Empire without the least shock, without a *Coup d'État*? Logic was, therefore, wholly at one with truth.

To those who have known the Emperor, and shared, in however slight a degree, his confidence, it is very certain that his mind would have ever leaned to lawful means. Louis Napoleon always placed his pride in being beloved: all evidences of sympathy flattered the weaker side of his nature; those that came from a whole nation naturally aroused his most lively feelings. To owe the supreme power to a France lawfully consulted was his

dream ; and the dream was capable of being realised. To transgress the bounds of this legality, to find the supreme power there, even with the complicity and the ratification of the country, was a proceeding that wounded his susceptibilities. He did not look upon it as a sufficiently conclusive manifestation of spontaneity. His secret ambition aimed higher. Louis Napoleon was inspired by the belief that he accomplished a providential mission—that, like himself, the whole of the nation was thoroughly convinced of this truth, and that no force could divert from their natural current the events that would lead to the increase of his powers. He so inevitably saw himself in the future with the crown on his head, that he considered himself, as it were, outside the pale of this great contest. He only aimed to smooth the transition between the régime that was foundering and the one dawning at the horizon ; he was convinced that no sacrifice would prevent the country from uniting her destinies to his ; that the country would overcome all resistance to maintain him in power—to enable him to extend, and to secure it to him for ever. One might, if so disposed, charge him with presumption and fatalism ; one would commit an error by accusing him of vulgar ambition. We were to a sufficient degree the intimate sharers of his inmost thoughts to be

able to affirm that he went even so far as to escape the very ambition which the greatest minds feel stirring within them when they draw near to the realisation of supreme power; and always for this very simple reason—that he did not think it necessary to covet what he regarded as an assured patrimony.

Are not Strasburg and Boulogne the most convincing proofs of this mystical faith of Louis Napoleon? In engaging in those foolhardy adventures he shut his eyes to the most obvious truths, to indulge only his blind hopes; he refused to admit to himself the rashness of his enterprise, face to face with a Government so firmly established as was that of Louis Philippe. At those two periods he perceived nought but the chimerical welcome of a people who, in his opinion, were only awaiting the opportunity of hailing the return of the ruler of her dreams. If it be but too evident, as facts have proved it to be, that Louis Napoleon counted upon arriving unhindered at the throne by merely landing at Boulogne or entering Strasburg, is it not much more admissible that as Chief of the State, already seated in the presidential chair, he considered beyond a doubt his remaining in power and even his elevation to the imperial dignity.

We remain, therefore, within the strict limits of

an undeniable truth when we say that in this Tours manifesto the language of the Prince was loyal, sincere, and without an afterthought. They were not words of hypocrisy, calculated to lull his enemies to sleep, to breed a false security: what the Prince had said in this discourse, as well as in the others he thought it, he wished it, and he believed it to be possible; it was the heartfelt truth, as it might be the truth of the future. But was not this very journey which the Prince was then taking through the provinces a direct refutation of the idea with which he was credited—of wishing to possess himself of the supreme power by violent means? What, indeed, did he do but prepare public opinion for a new election which he deemed inevitable? He greeted the country herself as the sovereign arbiter of his destinies; and if it were not lowering the Prince, even for a moment, from the high station he occupied, we should say that what we ought to see in him during those triumphal peregrinations* was the candidate for the supreme

* Triumphal peregrinations is indeed the correct expression; for, with the exception of Gambetta, no President, whether of the Republic or of the Chamber, ever met with similar receptions. First of all, no man ever appeared to better advantage amidst public pomp and circumstances than Louis Napoleon. Lord Normanby, by no means an admirer of the Prince-President, said that he looked "every inch a King." He was exceedingly generous, and had, above all, the art of making

power, who wanted to enlighten the people in view of a new election, rather than the despotic master come to prepare beforehand the pardon for an enterprise which, Heaven be thanked, could dispense with a pardon.

After the discourses in the provinces, where the Prince had met with the most dazzling ovations, came his discourses in Paris.

At the banquet given by the exhibitors at the Exhibition of National Industry, the Prince-President reviewed in the happiest terms the sound doctrines of economy. He criticised the unhealthy utopian visions, by means of which it was sought to deceive the working classes and to arouse the hatred of class against class. "Do not fail," he said to the exhibitors, "to propagate among your workmen the sound doctrines of political economy. By granting them their just share in the distribution of labour, prove to them that the interest of the rich is in no way opposed to the interest of the poor."

One must read all these discourses of the Prince, must weigh each of his words, because all had their himself very agreeable, while rigidly conforming to conventionalities. He was always particularly careful to say the right word at the right time, and never omitted to embrace a number of worthy persons of both sexes supposed to have rendered important services to the State, even if those services did not extend beyond the making of lint for the wounded soldiers of his uncle, or having embraced the latter on his marriage day. To the clergy he was especially deferential.—*Trans.*

value, to form a proper estimate of the man and of his sincere intentions at that period. They provide an interesting study of the undoubted progress Louis Napoleon was making in the art of government. The finer constituted nature is very quickly raised by an exalted position. We have already said it in speaking of the Prince himself. One has but to read the work of the first year of his presidency, and even the most prejudiced will be compelled to acknowledge that our praise is but the exact expression of the truth.

Read those speeches, you who so bitterly lavish calumny and injury upon the memory of Napoleon III., and if there still remain within you one spark of justice, you will find your anger disarmed. Notwithstanding your determined hostility, you will be dazzled by the light of truth, of justice, and of goodness, that shows through all those emanations of his thoughts. At every page you will see his love of country, his constant solicitude for this people you pretend to love so much, pierce through.

Off with your hats before this noble figure, instead of loading it with injury! For he aimed, by regular and pacific means, to assure to the people the welfare which you seek in vain to give them by your perilous methods. Had you been sincere, had not the lust of power obscured the love of country in

you, you would have acknowledged that this Prince, in his leanings, in his convictions, by his writings, by his manifest preferences, was much nearer the tendencies you affect than he was to ours. You would have hailed in him the crowned chief of the principles wherewith you deck your programmes; you would have perceived even on his throne the love of democracy pierce through his purple.

But let us leave these pardonable digressions to come back to the Prince, to follow him step by step through the revelation of his character, of his tendencies, of the aims he pursued. If those speeches of Louis Napoleon disclosed his personal feelings and enlightened the country with regard to his tendencies, it was, after all, but an indirect share in the political movement. His heart's desire was to take an effective part in it, and to exercise his authority. He reached this end by the more official manifestations of his will. His letters to General Oudinot and to Lieutenant-Colonel Edgar Ney*—both of which produced so great a sensation—turned the lime-light upon him personally, and won him the favour of some, the criticism of others, but the notice of

* The fourth and youngest son of Marshal Ney, born in 1812. In 1857, after his brother's death, he was authorized to take the title of Prince de la Moskowa. The Prince committed suicide about two years ago, for reasons which up to the present remain a mystery.—*Trans.*

all : to which fact he attached, not without reason, a genuine importance.

In each of those letters might be noticed the dawn of an idea which he felt it his interest to bring to light.

In his letter to General Oudinot he conveyed to the army his solicitude for its welfare, and his patriotic emotions for the honour of the flag. Later, and still with reference to the siege of Rome, he traced with a firm hand the true motive of the expedition, and summarized the conditions on which he wished to restore the temporal power of the Pope. He freely allowed for the just susceptibilities which blundering intrigue had bred. "If France," he said, "does not sell her services, she exacts, at any rate, the gratitude due to her sacrifices and abnegation." He once more found some noble words to thank the army for its behaviour. Thus day by day he progressed in community of interest and feeling with it, and by means to which no one could seriously object.

In all those manifestations of his thoughts—in his speeches, his toasts, his letters, his messages—the Prince had his plan, which he steadily, and one might say ably, pursued. No doubt by doing this he deviated from the traditional and regular customs of parliamentary government. He was fully aware

of it. When people charged him with only showing his ignorance on those occasions, the accusation was not strictly true. We have already pointed out the motives of the Prince in thus thrusting his personality to the front. We may add that he used it as a right of legitimate defence. What had not been said, written, and published concerning his supposed nonentity, his inability to share the direction of public affairs, his poverty of intellect? The most important personages themselves, with M. Thiers at their head, whose interest it was to lessen his prestige, to ruin his authority, had not they profited by the confidence of the public in their authority to support those amazing calumnies? Was not, therefore, the Prince strictly within his right to attempt himself to obtain the acknowledgment of his intellectual qualities by the most loyal means, and to reassure the country on the worth of the man whom she had entrusted with her destinies? It was not an attack; it was merely a parry and counter-thrust at the same time: only the thrust showed and left its traces.

But besides this grand popular rostrum which he created for himself, and where he had the whole of the country for an audience, the Constitution gave him access to the tribune of the Chamber itself. It was in the form of a message that his voice might

make itself heard before the representatives of the country. The day came when the Prince thought it necessary to have recourse to this new means of action, and to add to the manifestations of his thoughts, already numerous, a still more important disclosure of his policy and his tendencies. He had shown the country that he was familiar with all the great social and political questions, that he was a deep thinker and a statesman; he now wanted to show that he could join the deed to the word, and that he shrank not from any of the responsibilities of power.

The Ministry of the 20th December had for nearly a year held the helm of government. Almost exclusively, the Prince had, in fact, been nothing more than an illustrious passenger on the vessel that carried the destinies of the State, and to whom, out of deference rather than from a feeling of duty, the secret of its manœuvres had been disclosed. He had submitted, not without some show of temper and some attempts at insubordination, to this tutelage, inconsistent with his dignity; he had resigned himself to being thus thrust in the background, so long as he deemed it indispensable to the situation and useful to his practical education as Chief of the State. The 31st October he considered himself able to trust to his own wings, to

shake off the yoke, and to take an active part in the affairs of the State. He dismissed the Ministry which had made him feel its preponderance too much, which wanted to govern according to views other than his, other than those he considered beneficial to the nation. He took a Ministry that would accept his counsel, be guided by his ideas, make common cause, and thus resolutely march with him to the goal he wished to reach—the establishment of order, the pacifying of party spirit, the development of the people's welfare.

The following were the terms in which Louis Napoleon informed the Assembly and the country of the change of his Ministry and of the motives that had led to this step:—

“THE ELYSÉE, 31st October, 1849.

“Monsieur le Président,—

“In the grave crisis we are traversing the understanding that should exist between the different powers of the State cannot be maintained unless, animated by mutual confidence, they explain themselves candidly to each other. In order to set the example of this sincerity, I beg to inform the Assembly of the reasons that have decided me to change the Ministry, and to separate from men

whose services I am proud to acknowledge, whom I regard with friendship and gratitude.

“To consolidate the Republic, threatened from so many sides by anarchy, to ensure public order more efficiently than it has been ensured hitherto, to preserve the prestige of France abroad at its former height, men are wanted who, while animated by patriotic devotion, acknowledge the necessity of a firm but single directing power, and of a clearly defined policy; who compromise the supreme power by no show of indecision; who are as careful of my own responsibility as of theirs; as guarded in actions as in speech.

“For nearly a twelvemonth I have given sufficient proofs of abnegation not to have my real intentions misjudged. Without animosity against individuals, or against parties, I have admitted men of the most varied opinions to office, without obtaining, however, the results I hoped for from this attempt at conciliation. Instead of operating a blending of shades, I have accomplished nothing but a neutralizing of forces. The attempt to bring about a conformity of views and intentions has been hindered—the spirit of conciliation mistaken for weakness. Scarcely were the dangers of the streets passed but the old parties were seen to raise their standards anew, to recommence their rivalry,

to alarm the country by sowing the seeds of unrest.

“Amidst this confusion France, uneasy because she sees no guiding power, seeks in vain the hand, the will of him she elected on the 10th December. But this will cannot make itself felt unless there be a complete community of ideas, views, and convictions between the President and his Ministers, and unless the Assembly associates itself with the thoughts of the nation, of which the election of the Executive was the expression.

“The 10th of December meant the victory of a whole system.

“Because the name of Napoleon contains in itself a whole programme. It means order, authority, religion, the welfare of the people at home, national dignity abroad. It is this policy, inaugurated by my election, that I wish to see prevail, supported by the Assembly and by the nation. I wish to show myself worthy of the trust of the nation by maintaining the Constitution I have sworn to respect: by my loyalty, perseverance, and firmness, I wish to inspire the country with a confidence in me such as will lead to the revival of business and faith in the future. The working of a Constitution has no doubt a great influence on the destinies of a country; but the manner of its application exercises,

perhaps, a greater one. The shorter or longer duration of a Government contributes powerfully to the stability of things; but assurance to society comes also through the ideas and principles which the Government causes to prevail.

“Therefore let us endeavour to raise authority without disquieting true liberty; let us try to allay public fear by boldly grappling with evil passions, and by directing noble instincts into useful channels. Let us confirm the principle of religion without abandoning aught of the conquests of the Revolution. And we shall save the country in spite of parties and vulgar ambition, in spite of the imperfections to which our institutions are liable.”

A similar message disclosed entirely new horizons. The Prince openly abandoned his rôle of comparative submission and docility to take up the reins of power and to become the virtual Chief of the nation. The veil was rent; the man showed himself in his true light.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MINISTRY OF THE 31ST OCTOBER, AND THE LAW OF THE 31ST MAY.

The Ministry of the 31st October.—Its reception.—Mission of the New Cabinet.—The public functionaries: their rôle in the departments.—Partial elections of the 10th March, 1850.—De Flotte, Vidal, and Carnot.—The scare of the leaders of the old parties.—The *Burgraves* at the Elysée.—Indecision.—The Law of the 31st May.

THE sudden change of Ministry caused an immense surprise. The show of authority had the effect of a bombshell. For several days the political world was wholly given up to comment on the event. The message of the President was read and re-read in order to get at his intentions, and to obtain a rule of conduct from them. Friends and loyal adversaries alike agreed in praise of the loftiness of its language. On various benches of the Assembly, the Barrot Ministry was regretted. It numbered among its members men of worth, who had ably and courageously sustained tumultuous struggles; but, seeing that they in no way clearly personified

any of the parties, their retirement only gave rise to expressions of personal sympathy.

The new Ministry was coldly received. According to the parliamentary traditions of the last thirty years, men were not heaven-born Ministers; the dignity had to be slowly won by long and patent evidences of exceptional merit. Remarkable speeches, reports on great questions of State, on finance, on administration, on political economy, denoted to the Chief of the State the men who might best serve the country, and who were most likely to obtain the respectful consideration of the Chamber. Thus was created, as it were, a kind of ministerial forcing-ground. The future Minister served, so to say, an apprenticeship; he nursed his importance; and the day events called him to office he was ready to play his part. Each group had its men, and according to the political whirligig they assumed or quitted office. Their accession to public affairs was nearly always indicated in so precise a fashion, at any rate for the principal portfolios, that public opinion and the press could name them before the *Moniteur* had spoken. Under the Monarchy of July the King had often to accept rather than to choose his Ministers.

The Republic had only suspended those traditions for a moment. They were resumed almost

immediately, and the Barrot Ministry was the expression of them. MM. Barrot, Dufaure, de Tocqueville, de Falloux, had all the requisite prestige to accede to office. Notwithstanding the very sterling merit of the Ministers of the 31st October, it should be said that not all of them fulfilled the required conditions. Some, however, were already ranked among the notabilities of Parliament. M. Bineau, who assumed the portfolio of Public Works, was an engineer of considerable ability; he had drawn up some remarkable reports, was a fluent speaker, and perfectly at home in the tribune.

M. Ferdinand Barrot became Minister of the Interior. A distinguished lawyer, he had for a long while been a member of the Assemblies, he had an extensive experience both of men and things, a very correct judgment, a reputation for straightforwardness and loyalty; and it was owing to those qualities that the Prince had conferred upon him the functions of general secretary to the Presidency. It was owing to the confidence he had won from the Chief of the State in this delicate situation, that he was charged with the difficult mission of reconstituting in a great measure the administrative *personnel*.

M. Fould, called to the Ministry of Finances, had for some time been denoted for the post. He was

at the head of an important banking house, and inspired confidence to the financial world.

Admiral Romain-Desfossés, one of our most valiant sailors, became Minister of Marine.

As for the other Ministers, their choice was not quite so well understood. General de la Hitte took Foreign Affairs; as a soldier he enjoyed a considerable and deserved esteem, but he was not a diplomatist. The appointment of General d'Hautpoul to the Ministry for War was severely criticised, and not without cause. It was known that he owed his portfolio to his deferential assiduousness at the Elysée.

M. Dumas, the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, was already an illustrious savant, but he had given no proof as yet, with regard to the grave questions he had to resolve, of the remarkable aptitude he showed later on.

Finally, M. Rouher and M. de Parieu, respectively Ministers of Justice and Public Education, were two young deputies whose future career up till now had been a mere matter of speculation. He who chose them gave proof of great discrimination. Every one knows by this time the exceptional qualities M. Rouher showed himself to be possessed of; and if certain shortcomings unquestionably revealed themselves in this remarkable

mind, no one can deny that he was one of the most prominent individualities of the reign of Louis Napoleon. If from various causes he became a disastrous counsellor instead of remaining a marvellous auxiliary, as he showed himself to be at the Ministries of Public Works and Commerce, it was because advantage was taken of his yielding character to entice him from the administration of affairs, which were his favourite element, to thrust him headlong into the whirl of politics. They wanted to make a statesman of him: such rôle was consistent neither with his character nor with his temperament. Later on, in studying this remarkable figure we shall see that they only succeeded in making a splendid advocate of the Crown of M. Rouher—or rather an advocate of every cause the defence of which it pleased the chief power to impose upon him. We shall see the omnipotence this submission procured for him, the regrettable use he made of this power, the compromises to which he lent himself in order to escape the bitterness of retirement. Finally, we shall see how the most brilliant faculties may be irretrievably damaged by the absence of character and the want of conviction.

As for M. de Parieu, he realized the expectations formed of him. His speech of the 5th October,

1848,* had been noticed by the Chief of the State, who from that day made up his mind to attach M. de Parieu to him. His vigorous intellect, his talents as an orator, his reputation for honesty, marked his future place in the higher regions of the State—in which he firmly maintained himself in spite of the tenacious animosity of his rival, the Minister of Justice. By his services M. de Parieu justified Louis Napoleon's opinion of him. He was one of the luminaries of the Council of State; he was one of those counsellors useful to but independent of the Crown; he remains one of the noteworthy men of our time.

As may be seen, the surprise with which the Ministry of the 31st October had been received was, to say the least, exaggerated. The future showed that this Ministry contained men of real talent. The coldness it met with sprang, however, from the conditions of its creation, rather than from the nature of its composition. The Assembly felt a secret spite at being for nothing in its origin. In fact no vote had demonstrated that the dismissed Ministry had forfeited the confidence of Parliament. But what was the Assembly in the State? What services did it render, and what could be expected

* Curiously enough, this speech was absolutely against the election of the Chief of the Executive by the nation.—*Trans.*

from it? Had not it already shown its absolute powerlessness? Did not its very internal divisions condemn it to a condition of barrenness? It was merely fighting the air; it could only be an obstacle and never become an aid. Its deliberations could only result in a restless continuance of a ruinous provisional state of things, at whose end uprose a formidable problem. It possessed no elements in its midst capable of solving this problem. Instead of leaning upon this Assembly, which grudged him its support, the Prince turned his looks to the country herself; and, making common cause with her, he prepared the way for a partnership between them.

Besides, it was high time to act, and the Prince had understood this. At its accession to office the Odilon Barrot Ministry had found the prefectures, the administration of justice, the most important as well as subordinate situations under Government, occupied by a *personnel* devoted to General Cavaignac, and to the ideas which the former Chief of the Executive represented. From temperament, as well as from a similarity of tendencies, MM. Odilon Barrot and Dufaure had maintained in their situations the majority of those functionaries, declared Republicans, the greatest number of whom held their nominations from the Government of 1848.

Such functionaries could, naturally, not make up their minds to serve the policy of the Prince. If they disguised their hostility at all, it was only to avoid dismissal and to bide their time until 1852, when they firmly counted upon the return of a real Republican to the Presidency of the Republic. All the subordinates of those functionaries who shared their sentiments were protected by them. The result was that a notable part of the departments was still in the hands of the enemies of the Chief of the State. The Prince had often asked MM. Odilon Barrot and Dufaure to dismiss those functionaries; his repeated requests had been in vain. The very ones whom the Elysée wished to remove were loaded with praise; their efforts to maintain order were pertinently insisted upon; the suspicions of which they were the objects were attributed to unjust and interested denunciations: finally, they were allowed to remain. .

Apart from the prejudices the Prince himself suffered from this state of things, it produced serious inconveniences from a more general point of view. To the departments, to the communes, above all, to such of their inhabitants who take a share, however small or large, in the management of local affairs, the benefit of a change of régime, in accordance with their sympathies,

becomes only appreciable the day when their neighbouring depositaries of the public power are in harmony of feeling with them, and consequently with the Government. While the agents of the former régime, who were their natural adversaries, remain in office, there is no change in the situation. No doubt the latter are no longer the vanquished: but neither are they the victors; nevertheless it is the rôle to which they have a right. They often compromised themselves for the cause. They made sacrifices, one cannot blame them for expecting the reward of their devotion; they contributed to the success, they wish to reap its benefits. Their claim is a legitimate one. The Republicans, the makers of revolutions, take good care to put this doctrine into practice. They have unfalteringly and always applied it; they have cashiered prefects, sub-prefects, secretaries-general, councillors of prefecture, those magistrates that were removable, mayors, deputy-mayors; they have not even held their hand at the modest rural constable.

The Prince was therefore within the truth and within his right in claiming from his Ministers functionaries that were devoted to his policy, who should not prove themselves the persistent adversaries of his friends in the departments,

who would not beforehand and clandestinely endeavour to foil his eventual re-election to the Chief Magistracy of the country when constitutionally he might become re-eligible. By appointing M. Ferdinand Barrot to the Ministry of the Interior—the Ministry of politics *par excellence*—the Prince had hit upon a happy device. He was sure to be loyally served: he might, moreover, count upon a happy discretion and moderation on the part of his Minister—qualities exceedingly precious to the task in hand. In a few weeks a goodly number of prefects and functionaries of all kinds were cashiered or shifted; and the choice of their successors was calculated to obliterate the sufferings that had been endured. The French Administration became respectable; and, our irreconcilable adversaries apart, every one will be bound to admit that the branch of administration was worthy of respect and made good its claim to the gratitude of the nation.

Before the Chamber the Ministry of the 31st October preserved a prudent attitude; it was very careful to avoid all complications, and only engaged in debate when silence would have been desertion. It preferred deeds to words; both the interests of the country and of the Prince could but gain by the former. Thanks to this tacit

disarmament, tranquillity reigned once more in the Chamber, and might have continued to reign for some time but for a fresh incident which threw the country once more into extreme uneasiness.

In consequence of the disturbances of the 13th June, 1849, those of the members of the Assembly that were arrested as leaders of the insurrection were put upon their trial before the High Court of Justice. After protracted debates, and notwithstanding the eloquent efforts of their defenders, thirty-one representatives were condemned. The Chamber had naturally pronounced their disqualification, and the elections had been fixed for the 10th March. The energetic propaganda of the Socialist party, through its papers, by its emissaries, above all through the secret societies, made the Conservatives very uneasy about the result of those elections. Events proved that their fears were but too well founded. The Paris election, on which all eyes were principally turned, produced the most deplorable results. The candidates of order, General de la Hitte, MM. Bonjean and Foy, were defeated. The representatives elected were De Flotte, one of the chiefs of the barricades of June, 1848, and condemned in consequence; MM. Vidal and Carnot, both chosen by committees affiliated to the Mountain.

This result caused a genuine panic among the Conservative party. Our unhappy country, by dint of being tossed about by agitation and surprises, has ended by becoming pretty well accustomed to her misfortunes, and to create for herself a kind of listlessness, to escape, as it were, from a permanent fever. Instead of a well-considered and prudent appreciation of the situation, a kind of abrupt reaction is resorted to ; one goes to sleep in an atmosphere of false security, and when awaking, the perils that might have been but were not foreseen are exaggerated. This happened on the morrow of the election of the 10th March. Paris suddenly presented an aspect of sadness. Public securities fell considerably ; business came suddenly to a standstill, and the majority of the Chamber, under the influence of this movement, deemed that the hour had come for the application of energetic measures to resist the advance of Socialism.

The situation was very clearly traced out. On one side was seen this revolutionary conspiracy pressing ahead with raised vizor and threatening to invade everything ; notwithstanding the exile or imprisonment of its principal chiefs, it could boast new ones who were ready for the fray and continued the organisation of secret societies. On

the other side was the Assembly, divided against itself, wavering and suspicious, wishing to defend itself against a formidable foe, but hesitating to accept the heroic means that offered themselves to her to lay him low. These means the constitutional compact pointed them out: the revision of the Constitution was allowed; the moment had come to have recourse to this supreme alternative.

The Republic had once more been put to a practical test; it had shown its impotency—it only showed itself to be a fertile source of pernicious agitation. It became more evident each day that the country must come back to the monarchical form. There lay deliverance, though hidden by obstacles. Face to face with the revolutionary conspiracy on one side, with the Assembly divided against itself on the other; face to face with those two adversaries—the one powerful for attack, the other paralysed for resistance—the country saw the growth of the power which was her own work. Its expectation of deliverance centred more and more in the Prince she had elected. The chiefs of the dynastic parties assuredly perceived this manifest tendency; but instead of resigning themselves to a necessity to which sooner or later they would have to yield, instead of patriotically consummating the sacrifice of their chimerical hopes, they wore

themselves out in perilous efforts to continue the enervating provisional state of affairs which went by the name of the Republic. They flattered themselves that they were safeguarding the future; they only sacrificed the country to their illusions.

To the warning contained in the vote of the 10th March, they replied once more by an expedient of no lasting value. In their consternation the leaders of the majority repaired to the Elysée early on the morrow of the election. They had asked the Prince to devise with them as to the best means to weather the situation. At this meeting, accepted by the Prince, no understanding could be arrived at—and always for the selfsame reason, that not one of the leaders of the old parties would consent to anything that might fetter his action or pledge the future. No agreement, however easy in appearance, could be come to. There was a talk of constituting what was then called a grand Ministry; it could not be done. After endless discussions, during which no one gave his inmost thoughts, of which craft rather than mutual enlightenment was the main feature, it was resolved that, universal suffrage being the weapon which the enemy had used to obtain his victory, it was this weapon that should be destroyed. A Bill to attenuate the effects of this essential dis-

position of the Constitution of 1848 was prepared in great haste.*

Such was not the opinion of the Prince-President; but, his reluctance notwithstanding, he did not consider it opportune to oppose an idea with which the leaders of the majority seemed to be infatuated. He did not care to run the risk of breaking up this Conservative majority by his resistance; he allowed them to do as they pleased; and a Bill, which became law on the 31st May, was submitted to the Chamber.

To attain their ends, the leaders of the majority had placed themselves behind a barrier legally insurmountable—viz. the Articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution.

Article 24 provided, "That the suffrage is direct and universal."

Article 25 was conceived as follows: "Are electors, irrespective of the conditions of rental, all

* A Commission was appointed by M. Baroche, who had replaced M. Ferdinand Barrot at the Ministry of the Interior, to draft a Bill modifying the electoral law. This Commission was composed of MM. Benoist d'Azy, Berryer, Count Beugnot, Duke de Broglie, Buffet, Marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat, Léon Faucher, Jules de Lasteyrie, Count Molé, Count de Montalembert, Duke de Montebello, Piscatory, De Sèze, De Saint-Priest, Thiers, De Vatemesnil. Those were the honourable members of the Assembly, all worthy of consideration from their knowledge, experience, and probity, whom the Republicans of the time baptized with the name of "Burgraves."

Frenchmen of twenty-one years of age and over, in possession of their civil and political rights."

But Article 27 lent itself to various interpretations. It ran: "The electoral law determines the causes that may deprive a French citizen of the right of election or of being elected."

The law of the 15th March, which fixed the term of residence necessary to the privileges of electorship at six months, was capable of modification. An examination of those various texts resulted in the conclusion that important modifications might be introduced to the composition of the electoral body without touching the Constitution. The nature of disqualification might be extended; a longer term of residence might equally be demanded. This dual arrangement was decided upon: the term of residence was extended to three years instead of six months. By this provision the new law eliminated nearly three millions of voters from the registration.

The Government had scarcely taken any part in the debates. In that way the Prince escaped the stigma of a measure he deemed inopportune and inconclusive; the responsibility of it fell wholly upon the Assembly—its most eminent members being, in fact, the sole authors of this law.* M.

* The Commission appointed by the standing committees to examine the Bill included, in fact, the greatest notabilities of the Assembly. It had

Léon Faucher, its reporter, had valiantly defended its merits against the orators of the Mountain and of the Moderate Left. In this grand debate the victory remained altogether with the leaders of the old parties. But it was either a bootless victory or a perilous gain, if ever there was one, as the future would show.

So true is it that no final legislation is possible in a society the restlessness of whose leading spirits, encouraged by the very principle of its government, continually tends to transform the situation of the country. The efficient law of one hour may become the dangerous one of the next; and it is thus that we shall see the law of the 31st May, in itself prudent and salutary, protective and opportune at the time of its promulgation, become a short time afterwards the source of serious complications.

been taken in part from among the Commission called the "Burgraves," of which we have spoken already. It was composed as follows:—MM. the Duke de Broglie, president, Léon Faucher, secretary, Baze, Berryer, Bocher, Brinvilliers, Combarel de Leyval, Jules de Lasteyrie, de Laussedat, de l'Espinasse, Léon de Malleville, de Montigny, Piscatory, General de Saint-Priest, de Vatemesnil.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVIEW AT SATORY.

The Assembly prorogued.—The Legitimists at Wiesbaden.—The Orléanists at Claremont.—Various party projects.—Fresh journey of the Prince-President.—His Speeches at Lyons, Rheims, and Caen.—The conditions of peace with the Assembly.—The Committee of Permanence.—The review at Satory.—The attitude of General Changarnier, his bulletins, his secret designs.—M. Odilon Barrot and General Changarnier.—What the General expected of M. Dupin.—New errors of the Chambers and their causes.

ALL the episodes relating to the law of the 31st May denoted the impotent desire of the old parties to shake off the yoke of the Elysée, to recover their independence, to march henceforth each towards its aim—the restoration of their princes. From the 31st May to the 11th August, the date fixed for a three months' vacation of the Assembly, the sittings only offered a secondary interest compared with the stormy days of great debates. The progress of a marked ill-will towards the Prince might be distinctly noticed, however: a petition for an increase of grant was only voted after a painful waste of talk, and by a small majority.*

* Throughout his Presidential as well as Imperial career, Napoleon III. was often very cruelly embarrassed. Though himself very simple,

General Changarnier, while giving the Government the benefit of his countenance, took his leave, as it were, from and severed the alliance he seemed to have contracted with the Elysée. His attitude, rather nebulous on this occasion, was to become more clear very shortly. That of the other parties was also to become more significant. The masks were about to be thrown off.

In fact, scarcely had the Chamber separated but the Legitimist party got up a manifestation which assumed all the proportions of an event. The Count de Chambord had been drawing nearer to France; he had for the moment taken up his residence at Wiesbaden; and his most faithful friends first, after them a goodly number of his partisans, went to pay him their respects and the

he loved to travel in state and to scatter money with a liberal hand. His generosity was proverbial. His Civil List of £24,000 a year as President, and that of £1,600,000 as Emperor, was therefore never sufficient. One day, on the eve of the very journey alluded to in this chapter, after a Cabinet Council, the Prince took a couple of five-franc pieces from his pocket, and jingling them playfully together in the presence of his Ministers, he said with a smile: "There, that is all I have left for to-morrow's trip." M. Ferdinand Barrot saw the painful situation through the joke, and borrowed 10,000 francs from a friend, which he placed in gold on the President's dressing-table the same evening. The next afternoon the Prince had not a penny left of it. It was spent in subscriptions to local charities. Neither MM. Thiers, Gambetta, nor Grévy would have ever thought of doing such a thing; but Marshal MacMahon would.—*Trans.*

assurance of their devotion. The organs of the party carefully published a list of the visitors, and kept up the zeal of their adherents. A kind of census was made; and in their select assemblies it went as far as deliberation. The foremost question that invited discussion in those palavers of the leaders of the party was to define their attitude in the event of a fresh insurrectionary movement being provoked by the Mountain. It was thought that in such a contingency every dynastic question would be reopened, and they wished to be prepared to take advantage of possible complications. Generally speaking, it may be said that the friends of M. de Chambord were divided into two camps—that of action and that of discreet passiveness. The former fancied themselves able to boast an infallible element of success, of first-rate importance surely: it was the eventual support, or, to speak by the card, the complicity of General Changarnier. General Changarnier had given to at least one of the specially authorized Legitimist deputies the most explicit assurance of his devotion to the cause of the Count de Chambord. The General had not minced matters; he had clearly expressed his resolution not to favour the supposed designs of the Prince-President; he had declared that, if wanted, he would place his sword at the

disposal of Legitimacy.* The Republic was on its death-bed. In his opinion the triumph of the good cause was at hand, and presented not so many difficulties as it was supposed to do. It was but natural that such a confidence should breed in the mind of him who received it some zealous projects. The Legitimist deputy warmly insisted upon measures being taken for action at the decisive moment; he advocated a bolder and more assertive policy, that might tend to hasten a solution. His opinion went for nought in the councils of M. de Chambord. Nevertheless it was decided that, without going ahead as quickly as the confidant of General Changarnier wished, things should be got ready in view of possible events, and that in no case support should be given to any measure that might engage the future and pave the way for the elevation of the Prince-President to the throne. The Legitimist party became more militant than it had been in the past. Taken as a whole, it did not conspire, but it watched events more closely than it had done hitherto; it still remained attached to the Conservative party, but only by such slight ties as offered a

* The deputy in question is the Marquis de la Rochejacquin. It is from that nobleman's own lips that we have the statement with regard to General Changarnier. On several occasions we had the opportunity of conversing with him on this subject.* His recollections were exceedingly precise.

benefit to its own cause. The Government of Louis Napoleon could only count upon a limited and essentially conditional co-operation.

The Orleanist party also had its manifestation. A melancholy event had been its natural cause: King Louis Philippe died at Claremont, and a great number of important personages repaired to his funeral. As a matter of course, such a gathering could not well separate without discussing the events of which France was then and still might become the scene. The Orleans princes, a great number of former Ministers, and members of the Assembly, being thus brought together, discussion followed, and they examined the advantages to be taken of circumstances. At Claremont, as at Wiesbaden, various opinions confronted each other. Some proposed to combine the forces of the two branches of the House of Bourbon, to bring about a reconciliation between the Count de Chambord and the princes: it was the nascent idea of the fusion.* Others looked upon the mere idea to restore the monarchy, under no matter whatsoever form, as fraught with peril; they considered that for the present it was better not to overthrow

* Which, in February, 1884, is not an accomplished fact yet, and probably never will be. The influence of the Count de Chambord's theory of divine right is as great a bar now as it was during his lifetime.—*Trans.*

the Republic. Their plan offered apparently fewer serious difficulties than that of a restoration. It confined itself to make the revision of the Constitution impossible, and, Prince Louis Napoleon not being re-eligible, to bring forward in 1852 the Prince de Joinville as a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic. The well-known liberal opinions of the Prince de Joinville would, it was hoped, rally the Moderate Republicans to his cause. The Conservatives of no particular shade would willingly accept him ; and, the Orleanists aiding, a strong party might be constituted that would offer a solid guarantee to the men of order, and could with advantage oppose the candidate of the Mountain. Again, at Claremont as at Wiesbaden, the co-operation of General Changarnier was counted upon, if not as a candidate of a restoration by force, at least as an energetic adversary of any and every attempt of Prince Louis Napoleon to get possession himself of the supreme power by virtue of a final title.

From the point of view of the ancient great party of order, of that which had protested against the Republican candidates of the 10th March, and had contributed to the election of Prince Louis Napoleon, this arrangement might be considered as another defection of a big battalion.

The Prince-President watched, without troubling himself about them, those natural manœuvres of the old parties in search of a crown. He was conscious of his own strength, though he did not despise the means of increasing it. In 1849 he had made a triumphal journey through the western provinces; he resolved to put himself once more in communication with those populations that had elected him. It was Lyons and the eastern parts that he went to visit in 1850.

Again he found in his speeches the means of confirming his principles, to reply to the attacks of which he had been the object, as well as to the manifestations directed against his present and future power. This was his mode of defence; and none that produced a deeper impression upon the country at large could be found. Every one admitted that the situation was becoming unbearable and could last no longer. The Mountain openly conspired; the Legitimist and Orleanist parties were getting their batteries into position. The Elysée was like a besieged citadel: its assault was being prepared. The Prince loyally warned his enemies that he was resolved to defend himself.

At Lyons, on the 15th August, in his reply to the speech of the Mayor, the Prince said: "If culpable pretensions were revived once more, and

threatened to endanger the tranquillity of France, I should know how to reduce them by invoking again the sovereign will of the country; because I deny any one the right to call himself her representative more than I am."

It was a direct response to the manifestations at Wiesbaden and at Claremont, and to the plans which had leaked out. By thus proclaiming that he would again invoke the sovereign will of the people, the Prince made no mystery whatsoever of his intentions. He clearly indicated his method of defence. It was the appeal to the nation; it was without disguise the announcement of the 2nd December, in the event of the coalesced parties compelling him to have recourse to this extreme measure.

But, at the same time that he showed himself ready for the struggle, he showed his persistent preference for a pacific solution. Inviting the parties that threatened to break the strength of the Conservative union to conciliation, he said at Rheims: "Our country's only desire is towards order, religion, and prudent liberty. I have been able to convince myself that everywhere the number of agitators is infinitely small and the number of good citizens infinitely great. Let us pray to Heaven that they may not be divided! It is because of this that when

I find myself to-day in this ancient city of Rheims, whither Kings, who also had the interests of nations at heart, came to be crowned, I could wish to see an idea crowned, instead of a man—the idea of union and conciliation, the triumph of which would bring tranquillity back to our country, already so great by her riches, her virtues, and her faith.”

At Caen the Prince again expressed his hopes for a peaceful and lawful solution of the pending difficulties. As he had done elsewhere, he clearly indicated the means of deliverance—the constitutional means of prolonging and strengthening his power. “If,” he said, “stormy days were to come again, and the nation wished to impose a new burden on the chief of the Government, that chief would be very guilty to desert this high trust.”

The revision of the Constitution, the right to re-elect the President of the Republic, the appeal to the people—such was the programme of Louis Napoleon; such were his clear conditions of peace, those with whose triumph he was entrusted during the splendid reception that awaited him. It was the duty of the Chamber to take note of such language, to accept those repeated statements, to comprehend whither the persistence of the country was tending. If the Chamber prepared, as it were, the aggression by its continued resistance, by its per-

sistent pursuit of the chimerical triumph of impossible restorations, by its contemplated threatening attitude, it knew the resolves to which its conduct compelled the Prince. By simply reading the speech of Lyons over again it knew beforehand the fate in store for it. Between the Chamber and the Prince the nation would be called upon to judge.

At its separation on the 11th August the Chamber had left behind, as it were, a living proof of its dispositions towards the Prince. In its Committee of Permanence it had united both the most important and mistrustful individualities of the Assembly. Generals Changarnier, Lamoricière, and de Lares-ton, MM. Thiers, Berryer, de Lasteyrie, de Saint-Priest, Count Beugnot, Chambolle belonged to this Commission. Its mission may easily be guessed: it was to attentively watch the doings and sayings of the Prince, and to convoke the Assembly at the slightest sign of danger. The journey of Louis Napoleon, his speeches, the receptions he had met with everywhere—this kind of anticipated greeting of a more stable power had aroused most disagreeable sensations among the Committee. But what could they do or say? The Prince remained absolutely correct in his language; he respected the Constitution; the interpretation he gave to it had nothing seditious. At the utmost he could only be

charged with being too generous a player ; for he showed his adversaries every card of his game.

The day came, though, when the apprehensions of the Committee of Permanence were still further startled. We must refer to the occasion, because the incident that provoked those fears is also the date of the final rupture between the Prince and General Changarnier. The influence that resulted from this shock need not be insisted on.

On the 10th October the Prince was to review some regiments at Satory. A whole fabric of conjectures had been built upon the event. It was said that that day would witness the solution of the problem : the troops were to salute Louis Napoleon with the title of Emperor, and conduct the new sovereign in triumph to the Tuileries. Surely it was a feasible project ; and though the possibility of it by no means tempted the Prince, it caused the Committee some cruel nightmares. On the eventful day part of its members repaired to Satory, accompanied by a certain number of representatives eager to support the moral authority of their colleagues by their presence. The precaution proved wholly superfluous. The review went off like the others ; the Prince was greeted with the cries of "Vive Napoléon !" and "Vive l'Empereur !" by the army and an immense concourse of spectators, who

crowded the level of Satory—attracted less by the spectacle of the military manœuvres than by the hope of being present at some great political transfiguration.

In the march-past a contrast that was not customary had been noticed, though, between the attitude of the cavalry and that of a part of the infantry. The former had hailed the Prince-President with increased excitement; several regiments of the latter went by observing a rigorous silence. Whence came this difference, altogether new? It was known that those very regiments which thus remained mute entertained the most cordial feeling towards the Prince. Had orders been given to that effect, and by whom? The Prince naturally wished to clear up this mystery. An inquiry was set afoot; but before it had proceeded very far it was elicited that General Neumayer, the *alter ego* of General Changarnier, had enjoined several colonels to order their regiments to observe a rigorous silence during the march-past. This order had been strictly obeyed; hence the cause of the silence of the infantry regiments.

But in this instance General Neumayer could only be considered the interpreter of the commands of his chief, whose devoted friend he was. Consequently it was to General Changarnier, then, that

really belonged the responsibility of the silence of the infantry regiments. But why this change of tactics on the part of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris? At all the previous reviews—and they had been numerous—the troops had cheered the Prince-President in his presence; all the regiments without exception had marched past to the cries of “Vive Napoléon!” and often to those of “Vive l’Empereur!” Might it not be taken for granted that similar manifestations had at least the assent of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army? It was impossible to doubt it after reading the bulletins of the General complimenting his troops at every important review upon their excellent spirit and martial bearing. The excellent spirit to which he alluded could be, and in fact was, nothing else but the proof of devotion to Louis Napoleon, so openly manifested. Those congratulations at the lips of General Changarnier, were they not the distinct approval of the cheers that had greeted the Prince-President? Were not they at the same time an encouragement to the troops to continue to show “the excellent spirit” on subsequent occasions? Whence this sudden turning round on the part of General Changarnier? We shall soon be able to say—or rather he will say it for us; facts will speak for themselves, and show the truth in the most brilliant light.

However, if the review at Satory had disappointed the people that crowded thither, if it had given the lie to the journals hostile to the Elysée, who had noisily heralded the *Coup d'État* as the certain sequel to this military display, it had also two other grave results. On the one hand, it had conclusively enlightened the Prince with regard to General Changarnier's true feelings towards him—on the attitude he meant to take up. It had dictated the Chief of the State the resolutions that would uphold his authority. On the other hand, it had caused so great an excitement, so profound a feeling of irritation amongst the members of the Committee of Permanence, that the day became, as it were, the starting-point of a rupture between the Legislative Power and the Executive.

The pilgrimages to Wiesbaden and Claremont were bearing fruit. General Changarnier had passed his Rubicon. He was not long in initiating the whole of the country to the motives of his new attitude. In consequence of the review at Satory, General Neumayer's staff appointment had been changed into a command in the provinces. But however enviable such a position might still be, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris persisted in regarding it as the blame for what had occurred at the review at Satory, as a slight upon

his authority. He did not delay his answer. On the 2nd November, 1850, he published a bulletin reminding the troops under his command that they "must abstain from all manifestations and cries when in the ranks." In ordinary times such an order would have been natural enough; under the present circumstances it became a political act, a downright declaration of war. Nor was the attitude of General Changarnier in the Committee of Permanence less hostile. During a discussion between himself and General d'Hautpoul, the Minister for War, General Changarnier had clearly shown the part he henceforth intended to take. He became the general of the Assembly, the armed adversary of the Prince-President, the executor of the ambitions of the Monarchical parties, or, to speak more correctly, the eventual executor of his personal designs.

An incident which becomes exceedingly grave, as much from the facts it reveals as from the guarantee to its truth from an eminent and loyal personage, initiates us to the secret thoughts of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris. He shows him to us openly plotting against the government and against the personal liberty of the Prince. Later on, we shall have to call in support of our proofs, unimpeachable in themselves, this free and

spontaneous evidence of one of the most tenacious adversaries of the Empire and the Emperor from 1850 to 1870. Let us hear what M. Odilon Barrot says, in one of the most instructive pages of his "Mémoires."*

"I was staying at Mortefontaine," says M. Odilon Barrot, "when M. de Pontalba, an aide-de-camp of General Changarnier, brought me a note from this general, in which he implored me to come to Paris.

"‘Matters are becoming exceedingly grave,’ he wrote; ‘your presence is absolutely necessary.’ I thought that the critical moment had come, and did not hesitate. The post-chaise which had brought M. de Pontalba took us back to Paris, where we arrived about midnight. . . .

"‘As the ball may be opened at any moment,’ said the General to me, ‘I have taken the liberty of drawing you out of your hole. It is a toss-up who shall take the initiative—I or Louis Napoleon.’

"‘But have you made sure of the co-operation of the Prefect of Police?’ I asked the General.

"‘Oh, I am sure of Carrier’ (the Prefect of Police); ‘I can rely on him,’ said the General. . . . In answer to my straightforward question whether he had taken his measures to arrest the President, he said *that I had but to give him the order, and*

* "Mémoires Posthumes de M. Odilon Barrot." Charpentier, libraire-éditeur. Tome iv., p. 60, line 15.

he would put him in the 'salad basket' [prison-van, the French colloquial term for our English 'Black Maria'] to take him without further ado to Vincennes."

And M. Odilon Barrot adds :

"Seeing that I objected, and pointed out to the General that Carlier's first step would be to go and report this conversation to Louis Napoleon, and perhaps offer to render him the same service with the General, the latter's aide-de-camp, Valazé, replied—'So much the better; we are all very glad that they should know at the Elysée what we intend to do.'"

And if the reader wishes to know the conditions under which the General intended to consummate his revolt against the Chief of the State, how he intended to give the conspiracy of which he was the soul and the sword a semblance of legality, M. Odilon Barrot will tell us again :

"Nevertheless," continues M. Barrot, "I observed to the General that things had come to such a pass that the crisis could be protracted no longer. 'For what are you waiting to put an end to it?' 'Oh,' he answered, 'I am only waiting for Dupin's signature.'"

We need not insist upon the new light thrown on the situation by such a sentence. If we behold

General Changarnier impatient to possess himself of the supreme power, we also see the zealots of the majority group themselves around him as accomplices. M. Dupin's situation became more and more critical. Badgered, driven out of his wits by the members of the Committee of Permanence, he had shown a prudent reserve. He had not wished to break with those whom he considered to be dangerous conspirators, because the rupture would have led to their taking for President one of their own, who would have lent himself to their designs. He made it his business to gain time; and to temporise was to show prudence. Consequently he had neither promised nor refused; he had simply deferred this famous signature, which in his inmost heart he was resolved never to give.

After such crushing evidence, will those whom neither time nor events have enlightened, who have remained our irreconcilable adversaries, will they still dare to indulge their bitter recriminations? This *Coup d'État*, the recollection of which is sufficient to make them roar with indignation—"how," say they, "has any one been perverted enough to conceive the idea of it, sufficiently criminal to dare execute it?" Let them not come to us to be told. Let them consult at random the evidence of those that still remain of what were the leaders of the

majority of those days. Above all, let them listen to him whom they chose as their leader, and whose language I have just quoted. They will be compelled to admit that they also wanted a *Coup d'État*—of course for their special benefit. They wanted it as we wanted it; they wanted it before we did. If they did not attempt it, it was not because their scruples prevented them, but because they lacked confidence in their success and resolution.

Those, and those only, are the true reasons of their respect for the Constitution, got up for the occasion and from sheer necessity. Let them, therefore, no longer parade their tardy love for a fatal legality, the very shackles of which they did all in their power to shake off. Light has been let in upon the reality of their designs; their accusations and injuries are nothing more to-day than the recriminations of the defeated, still angry at having been forestalled in their attack, surprised in their preparations, and overthrown in spite of their desperate efforts at resistance. In the great law-suit which they prefer against the 2nd December before the tribunal of history, the dual and crushing evidence of M. Odilon Barrot and General Changarnier is in itself sufficient to ensure their condemnation.

But in this ardent, passionate struggle, in this desperate combat which the ambitious and most impatient of the majority forced upon the Chief of the State, how blind must they have been to believe for one instant in the success of their plans! What could have been the causes that betrayed a considerable group of eminent and experienced men into such an error?

Twice the same cause had bred the same illusions; twice this selfsame Palais-Bourbon, the seat of the Assembly, had witnessed the birth of the same error of judgment with regard to the real state of the country. In 1848 the Constituent Assembly firmly believed in the election of General Cavaignac, and the General sustained a crushing defeat. In 1850 the Legislative Assembly believed that its authority would sway the power of the Prince-President, and the future had an equally bitter disappointment in store for it. It is because at both those periods those who impelled the Chambers allowed themselves to be too exclusively swayed by the ardour of their hopes. They complacently yielded to the influence of the apostles of their idea, of those folk of good faith to whom the wish is father to the thought; they set too great a value on what the press said, on the daily rumours of the political world; and, in their more intimate

gatherings communicating to each other their impressions, their news, and their appreciations, they ended by creating for themselves a fictitious truth, the fruitful source of all errors. Amidst all their agitations they lived, as it were, a kind of comparatively isolated existence.

One may sometimes isolate one's self with impunity in the interest of abstract studies, and amid such solitary meditations, or amid an intimate and select communion, discover the solution of some philosophical problem. Even then the mind will gain from its contact with the world certain stimulants which aid reflection and enable it to discover entirely new horizons. A word may start an idea, a contradiction may dispel an error; labour incessantly pursued, even among those who seem to divert one from it, finds in its intellectual exchanges the most precious benefits. But when man pretends to participate in the political direction of the State, when he is placed sufficiently high for his counsel, his word, and his action to exercise a preponderant influence on the destinies of his country, whether the latter accepts or rejects it, such a mission imposes different duties and compels a more active existence. In such cases deep reflection is not enough; individual light is but an imperfect element. The science of the past itself, this guide

of the policy of all ages, only becomes a useful aid on the express condition of applying the lessons it yields in a thoroughly judicious and carefully considered manner. The teaching of history becomes a source of danger or of benefit, according to its interpretation. Comparisons elucidate; too strenuous imitation often proves a perilous stumbling-block. To extract from an intellectual storehouse all the benefits that may be expected from it, the study of the present must be combined with the lessons of the past. We must seek our inspirations, our guidance, our rule of conduct, in the careful examination of public opinion, in the just appreciation of the evolutions of the public mind. As much as intercommunion aids the discovery of the true, as much does the concentration of existence within the self-same atmosphere fatally lead to obstinacy and self-willed conclusions.

Those leaders of parties, those theorists of the fallen régimes, only breathed the vitiated atmosphere of the precincts of the Chamber; they could not thus fortify their minds and raise them to the level of the exigencies of the moment. The Prince, on the contrary, in his peregrinations across France deeply breathed of the vivifying air of our rural districts; he gathered strength from it and confirmed his belief. He thus went in search of truth

at her surest founts, without waiting to have its garbled reflects merely brought to him. And it was because of this, because of those differences in their political lives, that the Chamber was in error and the Prince within the truth.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL CHANGARNIER REVOKED.

Message of the 12th November ; its effect.—Interpellation of the 3rd January, 1851.—Meeting of the Leaders of the Majority at the Elysée.—Rupture.—General Changarnier revoked.—Effect produced on the Assembly.—*Mot* of M. Thiers.—The Ministry resigns.—Difficulties of forming a new Cabinet.—Transition Ministry of the 24th January.—Interpellation of M. Hovyn-Tranchère.—Petition for an increased Civil List.—Refusal of the Chamber.—Fresh attempts to constitute a Parliamentary Ministry.—Neither a day nor a crown-piece.—M. Odilon Barrot's opinion of the Leaders of the Majority.

PUBLIC opinion was very justly getting uneasy at the antagonism that existed in the higher regions of the State. The journals of all shades announced the revocation of General Changarnier as an imminent contingency. The organs devoted to the Prince's interest zealously recommended the measure. The excitement had spread to the provinces, and a great number of prefects called the attention of the Government to the necessity of tolerating no longer at the head of the Army of Paris a general who so openly assumed a hostile attitude towards the Chief of the State.

Why was general expectation disappointed? Why did not the Prince profit by the opportunity which the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris had given him to make an end of a situation which on all sides was deemed intolerable? To hope for a reconciliation with General Changarnier was an illusion not to be indulged for a moment; to spare the Assembly the slight which the disgrace of its supposed and devoted protector would produce was a piece of bootless Quixotism. The moment to strike had apparently come; and still the Prince held his hand. Practical minds then began to think that he committed an error in needlessly protracting and embittering a struggle which might lead to the most formidable complications against the peace of the country.

In attempting to sketch the character of the Prince, we have already pointed out, but we must repeat, that his personal inclinations leant less to energetic resolves than has ever been supposed. He did not shrink from them when their necessity had been pointed out; but it was a peculiarity of his character to exhaust all methods of conciliation, though he expected little from them, before taking decisive measures. On this occasion he yielded to his personal inspirations, and, to the great astonishment of the Chamber, and of General

Changarnier himself, did not deprive the latter of his command of the Army of Paris. He wished to make a last effort to restore concord, at any rate, between the Assembly and the Executive.

The 12th was the date fixed for the opening of the Chamber. At its reassembling the Prince addressed it in a Message breathing a lofty spirit of conciliation. He had faith in the power of his words; he felt convinced that loyal explanations might even at that moment efface the signs of discord that was becoming so embittered; he felt himself so strong, so powerful, so absolutely master of the situation, supported as he was by the almost unanimous goodwill of the nation, that he refused to think the Assembly would push its resistance to the bitter end. He did not wish to crush it; he wished to conquer it. All lawful means remained still open to solve the formidable problems whence depended the saving of the country; he was obstinately bound to appeal to them. He persisted in believing that the Chamber, tired of an unequal struggle, would at last recognise its want of power to accomplish anything without him, and that, yielding to the pressure of the country, it would vote the revision of the Constitution, and thus inaugurate the era of pacific solutions. It was under the influence of those generous illu-

sions that the Prince, in his Message of the 12th November to the Assembly, said :—

“In proportion to the fears for the present disappearing, the preoccupations for the future will become the greater. Still, France is above all desirous of repose. Scarcely recovered from her emotions from the dangers society has run, she remains outside the quarrels of parties and of individuals—so petty when compared with the interests at stake.

“Whenever I have had occasion to express my thoughts in public I have always declared that I look upon those who from personal motives of ambition would endanger the little stability the Constitution guarantees as very criminal indeed. This is my profound and unshaken conviction. Only the enemies of public tranquillity could have misconstrued the most simple proceedings necessitated by my position.

“As the Chief Magistrate of Republic I was obliged to put myself into communication with the clergy, the magistracy, the peasantry, the industry, the administration, and the army. I have striven from the first to seize every opportunity to show them my sympathy and gratitude for their co-operation. And if it be true that my name and my efforts have contributed to raise the spirit of

the army—of which, according to the terms of the Constitution, *I alone dispose*—then I am proud to say that I believe to have served the country; for I have ever used my personal influence in the interest of public tranquillity.”

And farther on the Prince added: “A considerable number of the Councils-General have expressed their wish for the revision of the Constitution. This wish solely concerns the Legislative Power. As for me, elected by the people, deriving my authority from them only, I shall always conform to their wishes, if lawfully expressed. The uncertainty of the future has, I know, given rise to many apprehensions, has awakened many hopes. Let us all try to sacrifice those hopes to the country, and only occupy ourselves with her welfare. If in this session you vote the revision of the Constitution, a Constituent Assembly will be called to remodel our fundamental laws, and to regulate the attributes of the Executive Power. If you do not vote it, the people will solemnly express their will again in 1852. But whatever the solutions with regard to the future may be, let us endeavour to understand each other.” The Prince wound up his message by these noble words:—“I have loyally opened my heart to you; you will respond to my candour by your con-

fidence, to my good intentions by your co-operation; and God will do the rest."

All the questions that preoccupied the country and the Assembly had been loyally confronted by the Prince. Proudly defying the threats of the various parties, he explained by one word, by the confirmation of his rights, the motive of his forbearance towards General Changarnier; he showed the proper construction to be placed on his journeys; he urgently showed the Chamber the constitutional way to avoid all collision with the country; he finally, in the most glowing terms, made an appeal to concord, and in the loftiest language gave the Assembly a startling lesson in patriotism.

The Message of the Prince made a considerable impression on the Assembly. The situation appeared less strained, and the Prince might for a moment indulge the hope that he had gained his purpose—the understanding between the great parties, and a solution of the difficulties through their agreement. But the suspicions were too deeply rooted, too many had an interest in keeping them up, for the disarmament to be of long duration; a single incident might prove sufficient to revive them. The incident occurred on the 3rd January. A journal published various bulletins of General Changarnier which appeared to show a

contradiction between his language of 1849 and that of 1850. An interpellation on the subject was made in the Chamber; and the latter, called upon, as it were, to declare itself for or against the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris, openly took sides with him. Under the particular circumstances this expression of confidence caused a twofold effect: General Changarnier was praised and the Prince-President tacitly censured in one blow. It was the crisis.

The Prince was bound to pick up the gauntlet thrown him by both the Assembly and General Changarnier. He resolved to act, and took a Ministry whose express mission was the revocation of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Paris.

The new Ministry was composed as follows:—

MM. REGNAUD DE SAINT-JEAN D'ANGELY, War.

DROUYN DE LHUYS, Foreign Affairs.

BAROCHE, Interior.

FOULD, Finances.

DUCOS, Marine.

ROUHER, Justice.

MAGNE, Public Works.

BONJEAN, Commerce.

But previous to carrying out his plan, the Prince wished to afford an explanation of it to the leaders

of the majority. The 8th January he convoked a meeting at the Elysée of MM. Thiers, Odilon Barrot, Count Molé, Count Daru, Berryer, Duke de Broglie, Count Montalembert, and Dupin. He informed them of his decision, and of the circumstances that compelled it; he spoke not only to those who were present, but through them to the Chamber, where he wished his intentions to be presented in their true light. But matters had gone too far: the Prince succeeded neither in making his listeners share the feeling to which he was compelled to yield, nor to obtain from them the assurance that they would assist him in a policy of conciliation with the Assembly. The meeting separated without much bitterness, but no one disguised the fact that the time of a rupture between the Prince and the Assembly drew nigh.

The next day, the 9th January, the ordinance that placed General Changarnier on non-activity and appointed General Baraguay d'Hilliers as his successor appeared in the *Moniteur*. The same ordinance provided—"that General Carrelet, commanding the First Military Division, shall continue the exercise of the command that devolves upon him pursuant to the laws in actual operation." The General of Division, Perrot, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the National Guards of the Seine.

Such was to be the fatal but natural upshot of the daring conspiracy of General Changarnier against the Chief of the State. The pains the General had taken to win over the officers of his army, to obtain the confidence of the Chamber and of the Paris population, had placed him in a position by which at a given moment he might have set himself up as the arbiter of the destinies of France. More than once he had been urged to do so; nor did he want the inclination. But he felt caught in the net he had woven for himself. As long as he remained the mere plotter, he held in his hand the solution of three problems, betwixt any of which he might choose. This was his strength. But the day he made up his mind to emerge from the shadow of conspiracy into the light of action he was equally bound to decide in favour of one only. To replace the Prince, impounded at Vincennes, by Legitimacy, Orleanism, or himself, would necessarily shatter the threefold support of his fragile power, and civil war would have been the sole result of his enterprise. We have to look no farther than this for the reason of the General's protracted hesitations and for his final want of action. His ambition, however great, had not wholly obscured his understanding. To the peril of failure he preferred momentary submission, whilst still promising to

himself the revenge of his defeat at some future day. The absence of the insignia of command would not make his intrigues against the Chief of the State less dangerous. If he lost the power inseparable from his high command, he found in his unfettered liberty some signal compensations. If he ceased to be the general of Louis Napoleon he became the general of the Assembly. On the 3rd January it had solemnly invested him with this mission; in its present attitude and resolutions he was to find a fresh and tumultuous consecration of his mandate.

After the 10th January the Assembly, which felt itself struck by the blow aimed at General Changarnier, had fiercely picked up the gauntlet and openly assailed the Executive Power. On a great number of benches of the majority the attack took this time a direct form. Outpost skirmishes were done with; the Chamber was incited to an energetic resistance; and M. Thiers, one of the most violent aggressors, finished his speech by the *mot*, become famous since, "The Empire is a virtual fact."

"There are moments," said M. Thiers in a burst of singular candour, "there are moments when fears may be entertained for the safety of the supreme power. To-day public opinion is tending towards the supreme power; no fears need be felt

for its safety. There is nothing to confront it but the Assembly, which, after all, possesses but a moral influence. If it gives in, there is an end of it; it disappears, and there remains only one power. After the fact itself the name will come when it is wanted. *L'Empire est fait** (the Empire is a virtual fact)." What, then, was the powerful motive that impelled M. Thiers to so violently oppose a power towards which he clearly saw that "public opinion is tending"? A sad spectacle, indeed, was this Chamber in the last throes of agony, ruined by its intestine dissensions. Powerless to combine for good, it could only unite for evil; it gathered up its last shreds of authority to overthrow the only power that could save the country and itself at the same time. General Changarnier, instead of leaving to others the eulogy of his work, though they had not been behindhand, thought it incumbent upon himself to bring his own apology to the tribune. He placed his sword at the disposal of the Chamber, and the bargain was ratified once more by acclamations and by a triple salvo of plaudits.

The Ministry had done its duty in this desperate struggle, which for three consecutive days had

* There was no possibility of translating the phrase otherwise than I have done. Neither the words "The Empire is a virtual fact," nor "The Empire is made," produce the same effect in English of their equivalents in French.—*Trans.*

thrown the country into a state of unnecessary excitement; it had valiantly pledged its own responsibility in order to shield the Prince; it had received the full force of the blow aimed at the Elysée. On the 18th January the Ministry tendered its resignation, and in exchange for his lost command General Changarnier could boast the platonic satisfaction of having caused the fall of a Cabinet.

The order of the day that overthrew the Ministry was carried by 417 votes, as against 278. It read as follows: "The Assembly declares that it has no confidence in the Ministry, and proceeds to the order of the day." It was drawn up by the Left. Such laconism proved once more how the internal divisions of the Chamber had limited its action. If it could still find a majority to destroy, it was absolutely incapable of finding one to construct. For instance, the majority had been unable to agree among themselves upon any order of the day that emanated from itself; and to accomplish the overthrow of the Ministry it had been obliged to suffer the humiliation of accepting from the Left, and as the price of the latter's co-operation, the order of the day that had been voted. It was its first punishment.

This want of power to constitute a majority of the Right made the formation of a Parliamentary

Cabinet impossible. Every combination fell through at the very start. Each group had its list ; but all those lists were so many appeals for war, and no one cared to make war for the benefit of his neighbour.

If the Prince at that time had been resolved upon a *Coup d'État*, he could not have found, either before the country herself or before history, a more ample justification of his enterprise than those three days of discussion, during which the Chamber had indulged the most violent aggressions against him. We can but notice once more his evident preference for a pacific solution ; he never gave a more startling proof of it. Whilst the Chamber prepared for battle, with the knowledge of having rendered it inevitable, whilst the journals of all shades announced an imminent arming for the fray, the Prince alone clung to conciliation and peace. Among the parties, who wanted, some the Legitimate Monarchy, others a kind of fancy Monarchy with one of the Orleans Princes, others still a dictatorship with General Changarnier, and finally the Republicans, who wanted all kinds of Republics, there was a small number of men, more reasonable than their fellows, who without feeling disposed to subscribe to all the plans attributed to the Prince, nevertheless considered his overthrow an impossible

enterprise. Those latter would have resigned themselves to the prolongation of the Prince's powers, on the sole condition of his giving them some part in the Government of the country—not necessarily as a guarantee, but rather as a personal satisfaction. M. Odilon Barrot was the chief of this small fraction. It was M. Barrot for whom the Prince-President sent. He bade him try to form a Cabinet of conciliation, and more specially one of revision and pacific solution.

M. Odilon Barrot was very near coming to an understanding with the Prince. He consented to remodel the law of the 31st May, he professed himself able, thanks to this concession to the Left, to obtain from it the additional support necessary to the carrying of the revision of the Constitution ; finally, he himself offered the Prince the prolongation of his powers, sure as he felt of the will of the nation to endorse the offer. To all this he added but one condition—a little more submission to the constitutional doctrines than had been shown in the past. One might say that an understanding had been arrived at, at any rate between the Prince and M. Barrot ; it merely wanted the leaders of the majority to establish it between the Prince and the Chamber. In this way matters would have progressed very rapidly, and by legal means, towards

the result which the Prince was afterwards compelled to ask from an act of authority, owing to the obstinacy and wilful blindness of some of the wire-pullers of the Chamber.

The opposition of the Monarchists having made the formation of the Barrot Ministry impossible, the Prince recovered his freedom of action: he could take back his own Ministry, composed of moderate men, and which counted some first-rate orators among its members. He was advised to do so; but it meant the continuation of the struggle, and once more he wished to give the Chamber proofs of his pacific intentions. Still, he could not go so far as to give his most violent adversaries, the Leaders of the Majority, the satisfaction which they had the presumption to expect from their victory. A disappointment was in store for them. In fact, what was their surprise when the *Moniteur* of the 24th January announced the formation of a Ministry taken wholly outside the Chamber!

This Ministry was composed as follows:—

MM. DE ROYER, Justice.

GENERAL RANDON, War.

ADMIRAL VAILLANT, Marine.

VAÏSSE, Interior.

DE GERMINY, Finances.

BARON BRENIER, Foreign Affairs.

MAGNE, Public Works.

SCHNEIDER, Commerce.

GIRAUD, Public Education.

The announcement of the formation of this new Ministry was, as it were, the olive-branch held out by the Prince to the Assembly. Time was wanted to restore tranquillity; it could be only arrived at by devotion to business, and not by the irritation of useless struggles. The Elysée offered a truce; the Chamber declined it.

Scarcely had the new Ministers taken their seats than war was declared against them. M. Hovyn-Tranchère interpellated the Ministry on the conditions of its formation, and on its policy. After the long and too recent debates of the Changarnier incident, little now remained to be said; the subject was exhausted. Consequently the discussion was more than lukewarm; it led to no significant result, and only supplied M. de Royer with the opportunity for a short but telling maiden speech. In a few eloquent and dignified sentences the Keeper of the Seals avenged the Cabinet for the affected contempt of its adversaries; he showed that he was a man to be reckoned with, however short-lived his own share of public affairs might be. But the attitude of the Chamber became threatening. Illusion was no longer possible: it

had evidently made up its mind to resort to extremes; it was resolved to let no opportunity pass to thwart the Presidential authority. Under those conditions, the Prince was not debarred from giving his adversaries "plenty of rope wherewith to hang themselves." It was not only clever strategy on his part; it would at the same time hasten a solution by means natural and appreciable to every one. Nor is it doing the Prince an injury to suspect him of knowingly leading a forlorn hope when he made his Ministry ask for an increase of his Civil List, even if he knew that such a refusal would only increase the want of popularity of the Assembly. Besides, a supplementary salary had become imperative, from the absolute lack of funds at the Elysée; hence, whatever the motive, he felt compelled to apply to the Assembly. Nothing was more legitimate than such a request; the insufficiency of the allowance of the President of the Republic being nowhere more candidly recognized than at the Palais-Bourbon.

We have said it at the outset of these pages—one cannot change in a day the habits, customs, and traditions of a nation. Such a metamorphosis is not accomplished by Act of Parliament. Royalty may be abolished by a revolutionary edict: to efface its traces, to stifle its memories, to obliterate its

benefits, long and terrible efforts are needed. And how very vain such efforts often are ! We witness those that are made at the present to divorce us from the past ; we can but notice their impotency. Our adversaries recognise the truth as we do ; for their very increase of violence is but the expression of their disappointment. On the 24th February, 1848, they had proclaimed the Republic, but they had not made France republican. Cowed for a moment, she had gradually resumed her former habits, and on the 10th December she believed in good faith to have returned to a monarchical régime. Above all was this the case with the petitioners upon the bounty of the former Civil List. Suddenly deprived by revolutionary puritanism of the relief to their necessities which was granted them by the generosity of the Crown, they easily indulged the illusion that the 10th December was to restore the past to them. The people scarcely knew the principal and fundamental dispositions of the Constitution and the new laws ; as for their details, they completely ignored them. Assuredly they knew not that instead of the twenty-five or thirty millions that constituted the Civil List of the King, the sovereign whom she had given to herself had only 600,000 frs. wherewith to defray the immense and incessant calls inseparable from his station.

It was thought that Napoleon, Chief of the State, must necessarily dispose of great wealth; and it may safely be said that each of the pensioners of the former Civil Lists addressed his petition to the Prince with the conviction that the Revolution had only suspended during a few months the payment of reliefs or allowances formerly accorded.

To this legion of postulants worthy of sincere interest was added a number of new clients at the Prince's accession to office. The Restoration had not been particularly solicitous about the welfare of the veterans of the Empire; the Monarchy of July had but very imperfectly supported them. The return of Louis Napoleon as head of the Government meant to their minds the day of reparation; and from all parts of France those of the relics of the Empire who lacked the necessaries of life, who had failed to obtain the well-earned reward of their services, addressed themselves to the Prince, from whom they expected as a sort of right the satisfaction of their requests. To those, as well as to the adherents to other causes, as to all those who were in want and suffered, the Prince opened his modest purse without counting.* Therefore an increase of

* I wrote the footnote to p. 113 long before I read the above. It only bears out what I said then. Louis Napoleon relieved all suffering that came to his knowledge, without distinction of creed, political opinions, or nationality.—*Trans.*

salary had become absolutely necessary. The Assembly knew all this; and if it did not blame the generous use the Prince made of the starveling wages given him, it felt envious beforehand of the popularity that might accrue to him from wider-spread charity to be indulged by means of its largess.

With a thorough want of tact, the Assembly rejected the petition for an increased grant submitted to it by the Ministry, and by doing so exposed itself, in the eyes of sensible people, in the eyes of those who were interested, and at whom it struck indirectly, in the eyes of the whole nation, to the grave suspicion of wishing to inaugurate a system of persecution with regard to the Chief of the State.

Such an incident could not pass unnoticed. France took sides with the Prince she had elected, and on the spur of the moment subscriptions were raised everywhere to supply Louis Napoleon with what the Chamber refused him. It wanted the refusal of the Prince, officially announced, to check this burst of sympathy. The Prince sold part of his horses, reduced his establishment, and, let us acknowledge it, resolutely discounted the future, rather than let suffer those whom he felt bound to assist. He alone felt cramped; he had experienced

far greater privations in the course of his life. He often jestingly alluded to what, without much exaggeration, he termed his poverty; and, his eyes fixed on the future, he easily consoled himself for the tribulations of the present.

After this escapade—and the word is by no means harsh, when applied to such petty worrying on the part of men invested with a far different and serious mission—the Chamber felt that it would like some repose from its labours, and, in spite of the terrors of the *Coup d'État* constantly announced, it separated for some time.

It did not seem altogether impossible to the Prince that the scattering of its members far and wide throughout the provinces, their contact with the populations, might exercise a beneficial influence on the former. He persisted in the belief that the day would come when reason and the evidence of the truth would silence party spirit, allay the ardour of unthinking passion, finally triumph over dangerous errors, and bring about in one patriotic accord the constitutional solutions France was wishing for from her inmost heart. He tried once more to make M. Odilon Barrot share these hopes. He sent for and charged him with the formation of a Parliamentary Cabinet, whose programme would be the selfsame one that

they had agreed upon previous to the formation of the Cabinet of the 24th January—viz. the voting by the Chamber of the revision of the Constitution and an appeal to the nation to decide the pending constitutional questions. One should be more just to M. Odilon Barrot than he was to the men of the Empire: it should be acknowledged that he sincerely associated himself with the idea of the Prince, and loyally attempted everything to ensure its success.

Everything having been arranged and agreed upon at the Elysée, the Prince having even accepted for his possible Ministers the very men who had just shown themselves his most zealous adversaries, M. Odilon Barrot started his campaign, and endeavoured to group around him in the Cabinet those of his friends by whose aid he expected to obtain a majority of common-sense. Common-sense was, however, no longer to be looked for in the Chamber. The overtures of M. Odilon Barrot were received with sarcasm. "Neither a day nor a crown-piece," was the answer given him. But let us listen to M. Odilon Barrot himself; his evidence is assuredly above suspicion. He will tell us that with the least show of goodwill of the Assembly, the *Coup d'État* would have become unnecessary; that lawful means could have given

satisfaction to both the country and the Prince; and that if an agreement was not arrived at between the Executive and the Assembly, the fault must be attributed to the leaders of the majority and the chiefs of the old parties.

“What, then, was wanted to succeed?” asks M. Odilon Barrot, in speaking of his fruitless endeavours to form a Ministry of conciliation.* “Merely that some men should have condescended to understand that it was preferable to revise the Constitution by regular methods than to risk its violation, either by a new act of popular sovereignty or by a *Coup d'État*, and that it was better to modify the law of the 31st May ourselves, and within a reasonable limit, than to see it solemnly revoked in its entity by Louis Napoleon. I say it without anger against persons, but with a deep feeling of bitterness against the fatal consequences that sprang from it: *it is from the very quarter that relief should have come that the obstacle came; and one cannot but acknowledge that the responsibility of the catastrophe, like that of 1848, lies in a great measure with those who, in the presence of an evident peril, have neither known how to yield, to resist, to organize the fight, or to lend themselves to peace.* If I had been

* “Mémoires Posthumes de Odilon Barrot.” Tome iv. p. 124. G. Charpentier, libraire-éditeur.

directly interpellated on the subject, I should have been compelled to state that this time the formation of a Parliamentary Ministry failed *through the fault of the leaders of the Conservative party.*"

And who is it that speaks the language we ourselves speak? We have already said it: it is M. Odilon Barrot, the man least suspected of goodwill towards us—M. Odilon Barrot, who at each page of his book uses all his ingenuity to point out one by one what he terms the errors of Louis Napoleon, who incriminates all his acts, who attacks unjustly and unpolitely all those who serve and support him, and who only renders this accidental homage to the truth because it appears to him in such a dazzling light that he virtually renounces the attempt to hide it. To thus condemn his warmest friends, to say that with them arose the obstacle, to distinctly lay with them the responsibility of the *Coup d'État*, is it not absolving Louis Napoleon a hundred times from the stigma of his bold enterprise? And if M. Odilon Barrot proclaims so loudly this unimpeachable truth, is there any need for us to add aught to such admissions?

Let it not be thought, however, when we speak like this, that we wish to palliate our acts; let it not be supposed that we ask others to share the

responsibilities that weigh heavily neither on our conscience nor on our patriotism. It simply pleases us to dispossess our adversaries, by the hands of one of their own, of the right to accuse us. And when, later on, we shall say that on the 2nd December we did nothing but respond to the urgent needs of a situation which was not our handiwork, that we only undid, at the risk of our lives, the tangled difficulties that were the work of the various parties, if contradiction comes to us we shall only have to reply: Read your historian, read M. Barrot; he will tell you that it is you, and you only, who proved *the obstacle* to the pacific and constitutional solution of the crisis. To each one the part that belongs to him in history: to you the errors committed; to Louis Napoleon the glory of having repaired them.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DEBATES ON THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

Tactics of the Prince-President with the Assembly.—Ministry of the 10th April.—Article CXI. of the Constitution.—The speech at Dijon.—Discussion on the petition for the revision of the Constitution.—The Republic judged by M. de Falloux.—General Cavaignac confirms the Republican doctrine.—Prophecy with regard to M. Thiers.—MM. Berryer and Pascal Duprat.—The diatribes of M. Victor Hugo.—MM. Baroche, Dufaure, and Odilon Barrot.—The motion rejected.—Indirect resumption of the Debate.—Vote of censure on the Faucher Ministry.—Two courses open to Louis Napoleon.—The one he decides upon.

To boldly risk this constant provoking of the Prince, as did the leaders of the majority, they must have had either a very exalted idea of the former's forbearance or a profound contempt for his authority. It is more likely, though, that they were stricken with a singular blindness, which made them think that this war of pin-pricks would prove favourable to their designs. The least reflection would have shown them the manifold dangers their headlong course was attracting on their heads. They might exasperate the Prince, and by so doing

compel him to renounce all patience, and thus provoke the outbreak of the crisis—the *Coup d'État* which, in spite of their bravado, was the constant source of their anxiety. They must also have been aware that they irritated a great many sensible people and troubled the peace of the country, that day by day they lessened the number (so reduced already) of their adherents, to throw them back into the ranks of the partisans of Louis Napoleon. Everything, therefore, was prejudicial to their cause, and beneficial to the Chief of the State in this course of systematic aggression.

Of what use were, then, those powerful faculties of the most eminent men of France, in council assembled, if between them they could not succeed in fathoming the true intentions of the Prince, whom to thwart they had made their study? Why, then, did they fail to divine his plan of action, to foresee his resolutions, to seize the drift of his acts, to opportunely parry the blows he dealt them? So powerful by their intellect and experience, why were they beaten in all their encounters by their enemy—who alone, and almost without counsel, from his retreat at the Elysée laughed at their menaces, profited by their blunders, and prepared to strike at them in his own time if he failed to bend them to his will? Why this strange contradiction?

Why were the strong crushed by him whom they called the weak? Because the weak had on his side truth, reason, the immense co-operation of the country, a clearly defined aim that could be openly avowed—to wit, the saving of France without agitation and without disorder—and because the strong were, on the contrary, without cohesion, because darkness alone could prolong their compromise; because, however honourable their devotion to their cause, the country failed to credit them with either the concern for her welfare or the power to ensure her tranquillity. Proportionate to the frequency of attacks was the benefit derived by Louis Napoleon from his imperturbable patience in choosing his mode of counter-attack. Often, and through mere calculation, he delayed it. He preferred to let the public mind regain its composure on the morrow of parliamentary perturbations; he affected a kind of pride, as it were, in being avenged by public opinion before avenging himself; then, at the carefully chosen moment, he struck in his turn—and blows that left their mark.

It is thus that after he had crushed General Changarnier he patiently allowed the Chamber to pile error upon violence. He had without a murmur allowed the offensive order of the day of the 6th January to pass. He had apparently taken

no notice of the refusal for a supplementary grant, and of the insults that had so compendiously accompanied this refusal; he had not seemed to mind the refusal to co-operate in the formation of a Cabinet of conciliation; he was not even moved by the gross injury contained in the sentence bandied about in the Chamber—"Not a day nor a crown-piece:" which was nothing more than a bit of impolitic bluster, seeing that there was neither a majority to act nor a country to approve.

But in a speech delivered at Dijon, to which we shall have to refer by-and-by, the Prince-President took care to settle arrears with his adversaries, and to give them, at the same time, a hint of what he expected from the Chamber in the debates that had become imminent on the demand for the revision of the Constitution. But before committing himself to speech, and especially in expectation of this solemn discussion, he had formed a Parliamentary Ministry capable of standing the onslaughts of the tribune. By the 10th April, 1851, he had got together a new Cabinet. Unable to include those whom M. Odilon Barrot termed "the leaders of the Conservative party," and who, on the contrary, were nothing but the firebrands of the coalition, he composed it of his most eminent friends. Nevertheless, he made the great concession to the party of distrust to

confide to one of its accredited members, M. Léon Faucher, the portfolio most important at such a critical moment—that of the Interior. The presence of M. Léon Faucher at the Interior, said as plainly as words could speak, that, as long as he occupied this post, he, the parliamentarian *par excellence*, nothing would be attempted against the Chamber, that no fears need be entertained of a *Coup d'État*.

The Cabinet of the 10th April was composed as follows:—

MM. BAROCHE, Foreign Affairs.

ROUHER, Justice.

LÉON FAUCHER, Interior.

MAGNE, Public Works.

Marquis DE CHASSELOUP-LAUBAT, Marine.

General RANDON, War.

FOULD, Finances.

Marquis DE CROUSEILHES, Public Education.

BUFFET, Commerce.

It was evident that before resuming the struggle the Chamber wanted to see the new Ministers at work; consequently it threw out a vote of no confidence, somewhat too prematurely moved by the Left. It did not lay down its arms; it merely waited.

Nevertheless, the critical moment was at hand when the Chamber had to confront the grand debate on the revision. Article CXI. of the Constitution fixed its possible date, which was eagerly looked forward to as the beginning of the decisive encounter on this battle-ground of the revision of the fundamental compact. Article CXI. ran as follows :—

“When in the final year of a Legislature, the National Assembly shall have declared its wish for the partial or entire modification of the Constitution, this revision shall be proceeded with in the following manner :

“The revisional Assembly shall only be elected for three months. It shall only occupy itself with the revision for which it was convoked. Nevertheless, in case of urgent need, it may provide for legislative necessities.”

If this constitutional provision was not known in all its details throughout the country, its main spirit was by no means ignored. It was known that on and after the 28th May the petition for the revision of the Constitution might be regularly deposited with the Chamber ; consequently the petitions which for a long time already had been addressed to the Assembly were increased with great vigour. They soon became an avalanche ; and, whatever its own feeling

on the subject, the Chamber saw itself compelled to obey this pressure and to engage on this grave discussion, which might lead to a peaceful solution, but which might equally compel decisive resolves.

At the very outset of the debate the Prince thought it his duty to warn the Chamber and the country of the attitude he meant to take in the event of possible complications. The banquet at Dijon would offer him a rostrum for the ventilating of his legitimate remonstrances against the aggressions of the past months—a platform from which he might pronounce a proud warning which would reveal both his confidence in his own strength and the firmness of his resolves. On the 1st June, 1851, replying to the toast of the Mayor of Dijon, the Prince said :

“I could wish that those who doubt the future had accompanied me among the populations of the districts of the Yonne and the Côte-d’Or. They might have taken heart by judging for themselves of the real disposition of public spirit. They would have become aware that neither intrigues, attacks, nor envenomed party strife are in harmony with the feelings or conditions of the country. France desires neither the return of the ancient régime, disguised in no matter what shape, nor the experiment of impracticable and dangerous utopian

theories. It is because I am the natural adversary of the one and the other, that she has placed her trust in me. If this were not the case, how could the touching sympathy of the people with regard to me be explained?—a sympathy that resists the most violent polemics and exonerates me from all share in her sufferings.”

It was the answer to the party tactics, to the underhanded dealings of the Chamber, to the fruitless attempts at fusion pursued by the leaders of the majority, to the insults from the tribune, to the aggressive orders of the day, to the purposely hostile votes of the Assembly. After this vindication of the past the Prince turned to the future, and he resumed :

“A new phase of our political era begins. From one end of France to the other petitions are being signed praying for the revision of the Constitution. I await with confidence such manifestations of the country, and such resolutions of the Assembly, as are inspired solely by concern for the public welfare.

“Since I acceded to power I flatter myself to have proved how, in the presence of the supreme interests of society, I can waive all consideration of self. The most violent and unjust attacks have not exhausted my patience. Whatever duties the

country may impose upon me, she will find me ready to obey her will; and be assured, gentlemen, that France shall not perish in my hands."

Words like these were scrupulously correct. If the Prince placed his hand on the hilt of his sword, he did not draw it from its scabbard; and the susceptibilities those words provoked in the Chamber were the more exaggerated, seeing that in numerous similar circumstances the Prince had used the like. But the Assembly felt irritable. Its faults, of which it was conscious, had wound it up to a chronic state of excitement, that caught at every opportunity to show it. Hence the speech at Dijon had the honours of an interpellation.

This time, to the hackneyed and reiterated comments of the oppositions held together by the common bond of fear of a *Coup d'État*, there was added an act the importance of which should be fully measured. Goaded by his insatiable craving for notoriety, General Changarnier thought it necessary to get into the tribune. He believed himself invested with the exclusive mission of protecting the Assembly. He let no opportunity go by to remind it of this mission, and he assured it with pride that it might trust to his vigilance and authority. Replying to the Minister for War, General Changarnier said:—

“The soldier will always obey the voice of his chief, but no one will induce our soldiers to march against the laws and against this Assembly. *Not a battalion, not a squad, will be enticed into this fatal path; because they would be confronted by their chiefs whom they are in the habit of following into the path of duty and honour.* MANDATORIES OF FRANCE, YOU MAY DELIBERATE IN PEACE!!!”

One must weigh the words of this manifesto to appreciate the full scope of its intentions. It was tantamount to a summons to the army to revolt at a given moment, to refuse obedience to their hierarchical chiefs. It warned those chiefs that if, as they were bound to do by the military laws, they made themselves the faithful executors of the orders of the Minister for War, they would find themselves confronted by seditious generals to take their places and so lead their battalions to rebellion. Words guilty enough assuredly, but above all unpardonable on the lips of a soldier, who thus publicly insulted the army, and those at its head, in overlooking its most essential and most precious virtue—blind obedience to the orders of its chiefs and unquestioning respect for discipline. Vain and haughty words: for in his inmost heart, whatever idea he may have had with regard to his own merits and his influence on the troops, General

Changarnier could not have for one moment conceived the possibility of being able to convert the army into a mutinous cohort. Imprudent words, dangerous tall-talk : because in thus laying bare his secret designs, he put the Government on its guard ; he warned the generals to watch over their men more closely than ever ; he stimulated their feeling of duty, and imbued them, as it were, with the idea of vindicating the affront to their fidelity. Finally, fatal and perfidious words : because they deceived the Chamber by holding out to it the dazzling but chimerical hope of victoriously opposing by force an enterprise directed against it. They encouraged its inclinations to strife, and prepared a hostile majority on the eve of the debates on the revision, when the efforts of its prudent members who wished to arrive at the public good without violent commotion, tended on the contrary, were directed, to allay the passions and to profit by the salutary fear that swayed the Assembly to obtain from it concord and a pacific solution.

We must omit nothing with reference to this short oratorical performance, which it has pleased people to invest with a kind of celebrity, but to which events have rendered justice, restituting its real character—that of being ridiculous. It was not the exclusive work of General Changarnier.

Those few words aspired to the dignity of a manifesto, and they were the subject of a discussion, in due form, between three or four of the Prince's most irreconcilable enemies. M. Thiers made one of this secret conference. The primary idea belonged undoubtedly to General Changarnier; and he had, as usual, committed his first flow of eloquence to paper. This document—(the communication of which we owe to a friend who is its jealous owner)—this document, which contains the genuine primary idea of the General, is covered with corrections. Its composition seems to labour and to halt. On a second leaf is the copy of the first effort, but still covered with corrections. Finally, the *factum* is copied on a third leaf. It is the clean copy of this masterpiece which the orator-general had succeeded in imprinting upon his memory, and which he delivered on the 3rd June from the tribune, amidst the frenzied applause of a majority, that had worked itself up to a delirium at the most trifling cost.*

The excitement of the speech at Dijon, and of the incident it had provoked, had scarcely subsided when the Assembly began the great debate on the revision of the Constitution. The Bill had been

* The three leaves are still as they were in 1851, at General Changarnier's, held together by a pin. The last is written on the fly-leaf torn from some printed letter of invitation to a funeral or wedding.

laid on the table by the Duke de Broglie, which sponsorship invested it with the gravity due to its character. The Committee had been appointed on the 7th June; its reporter, M. de Tocqueville, deposited his report on the 25th June; and on the 14th July was opened this solemn debate, which during six protracted sittings afforded the free ventilation of any and every opinion.

Taken exclusively by itself, this discussion sums up all the causes of complaint of the various parties—all their hopes, their doctrines, their programmes. In virtue of this title alone we are bound to concede more space to it than we have hitherto devoted to the debates of Parliament. It is, in fact, highly important to know from their own lips what the adversaries of Louis Napoleon wanted. In this revelation we shall find both the origin and the justification of the subsequent decisions forced upon the Prince-President by the wire-pullers of the coalesced parties.

After the customary apotheosis of the merits of the Republic, by one of the purists of the Mountain, M. de Falloux engages in the debate, and at the very outset raises its tone. In admirably chosen language he demonstrates first of all the right, the moral and constitutional liberty, of the Assembly to vote the revision of the Constitution. He will

have nothing to do with a partial revision, what he wants is entire and absolute revision. By this supreme appeal to the wishes of the country, he expects France to emerge from the state of distress in which she is held captive by the continual experiment of the republican form of government. With infinite tact, he brings to light the country's want of fitness to live under a Republic. "A Republic is not made with 'circulars,'" he says; "neither is it made with commissioners. A Republic is made with habits and customs, with institutions, by virtue of a republican geographical position; a Republic is made with republican virtues. That is how a Republic is made, if it be made at all. Short of that, it becomes a detestable and pitiful sham."

After which the orator refutes the fallacious doctrine that "the Republic is the régime that divides us least"—a doctrine by the aid of which M. Thiers attempted then, as afterwards, to lull the country to sleep on the brink of a precipice. "The Republic," said M. de Falloux, "is not the régime that divides us least: it is the régime that enables us to remain divided, which is a different thing; it is the régime which allows us to remain divided against each other—loyally, honourably, conveniently as far as we have gone. But to-morrow this may perhaps no longer be the case."

“ Well, it is an advantage which we have enjoyed for the last three years ; it is quite enough ; do not let us abuse it.

“ This régime which divides us least is that which ruins France, which renders nought all her strength, which condemns the great party of order to a radical and insuperable condition of impotency ; it is the régime which not only condemns our country to immobility, but to lethargy—to the kind of condition when there is still sufficient consciousness left to perceive that your grave is being dug and your shroud being sewn, but not sufficient to cry out or to make the motion that would save you from being buried alive.

“ This is the condition to which we have been brought by the régime that divides us least.

“ Well, such a condition cannot last long without becoming mortal to a nation. It is a condition of lethargy, every one knows it ; and to a condition of lethargy there are but two alternatives—that of death or of awakening. Therefore we must stoutly and loyally set to work ; we must sound the evil to its uttermost depth, and endeavour, not to apply a palliative, but to find a cure for this evil.”

Finally, M. de Falloux points to the Monarchy as the only sheet-anchor, and remaining within the domain of theory, steering clear of all exclusivism,

he appeals to men of all parties to help in this patriotic work. In his opinion the Red Spectre is only to be dreaded while the Conservatives are divided among themselves; their union will instantly cause it to vanish. Union to save France—such is the summary of this eloquent and patriotic address. And assuredly we may be pardoned for inviting those who have unconsciously been betrayed into accepting the republican form of Government to carefully ponder those wise and philosophical words of M. de Falloux.

After M. de Falloux, M. de Morny^f is heard on behalf of the Orleanist party. What he wants he says outright. He rejects the revision of the Constitution, because the revision is the prelude to the Empire; and he wishes at all costs to avoid so perilous a contingency. He acknowledges neither the right divine Monarchical, nor the right divine Republican; whatever happens, he will remain riveted, as it were, to his memories and to his hopes. His hopes are easily understood: it is in some form or other an Orleans Prince at the head of the Government.

To General Cavaignac is reserved the task of bringing to the debate the defence of the Republican doctrine. He accomplishes it with remarkable talent—with a moderation, a tact, and a feeling

of dignity by which one recognises the man who has filled the foremost rank in the State. If he is condemned to resort too often to abstruse theories, if he is compelled to take up once more the axiom of M. Thiers—"the Republic is the régime that divides us least"—the fault lies with the necessities of his cause. With General Cavaignac the Republic is a right and an indisputable one. The revision of the Constitution is decidedly premature. Such an enterprise can only be logical and fruitful after a long and conscientious trial. But under no conditions will the orator admit the right of a Republican Constitution to re-elect the Chief of the State, or to prolong his term of office. He opposes the revision because he sees in it, without admitting it in speech so much as in thought, the lawful privilege granted to the nation to perpetuate the power on the head of Louis Napoleon, and perhaps to modify its form. The energetic and irrevocably determined resolutions of his party may easily be gathered from the drift of General Cavaignac's speech.

M. Michel de Bourges in his turn ascends the tribune. We must note here in its proper place a prediction by which he enlivened these debates for a moment. It was M. Thiers who paid the penalty. To M. Thiers, who at that time assailed the revolu-

tionary movement with all the ardour of his mind, perhaps of his convictions, to M. Thiers who set himself up as the promoter and supporter of the reactionary laws, M. Michel de Bourges addressed the somewhat pungent prophecy: "M. Thiers, he will more and more be coming over to our side; for he is a Frenchman, a revolutionary at heart, even more than he is aware, and more than he cares to admit." (Great applause and laughter, in which M. Thiers joins.)

M. Michel de Bourges knew his adversary of 1851.* If he had lived twenty years later he would have found him one of the warmest partisans of a new Republic; but that one gave him power, and assuredly he could not show himself ungrateful.

The speech of M. Berryer was anxiously looked for. No more propitious opportunity than this one could have been offered him for the display of his magnificent oratorical talents. He had to avenge royalty for the accusations M. Michel de Bourges had showered upon it; above all, he had to refute the cruel charge of its being antipathic to the nation. The necessities of his defence carried him, perhaps, beyond the traditional programme of the majority

* Michel de Bourges had been his college chum at Aix. Michel de Bourges was the author of the famous dictum that the most difficult thing to obtain from members of the Assembly who did not speak was that they should keep silent.—*Trans.*

of his friends when he glorified the Revolution of 1789, when he disputed its heritage to the Republic itself in order to appropriate it to his own cause. "But the Republic," he said, "has broken every principle of the institutions of 1789. . . . But what of your friends Touret and Bailly and Chapelier, and so many others whom I could cite, who founded the institutions of 1789? They perished on the scaffolds of 1789. There is, indeed, an enormous distance between you and 1789. Its principles, its great reforms which we claim for our country, which we shall know to maintain for her, for which we have pledged our lives. . . . You know whether I have been unfaithful to the principles of 1789; and my friends are as staunch to them as I am. My friends wish to defend them, those principles; they claim them for the better government of the social fabric. And beware how you say that monarchy is incompatible with them. You forget that the great work of 1789, invited, as it were, by the most virtuous of Kings, invited by the grand martyr Louis XVI., that this great work was based on the principle of the hereditary succession of the public sovereignty. . . ." (Cheers, and "It's true, it's true.") "Where, then, will you seek your incompatibilities?"

M. Berryer felt more on his own ground when,

with all the fire of his great oratorical gifts, he began the apology of the Restoration. He had some relentless truths to tell, and they lost nothing at his lips. On the great subject under discussion he said little, and his inmost thoughts remained, no doubt, voluntarily wrapt in a kind of mist. He voted the revision, and placed his slender hopes of the Restoration in the decisions of the Constituent Assembly to be subsequently elected. But in the event of the proposed revision being rejected, an event which he thought probable, he insisted upon the submission of all to the present law. Consequently, he asked the Prince to bow to the ostracism which the Constitution of 1848 pronounced intentionally against him. At the same time he asked the country to stifle her inclinations and convictions, to await amidst protracted Republican agonies the salvation due to some chance hidden as yet. One dread haunted him above all others : if the revision of the Constitution was not voted by the Chamber, it meant the illegal, but to his mind inevitable, re-election of Louis Napoleon. He showed him to the Chamber as absolutely commanding the situation, as master of the country, master of everything. Such a solution meant the certain destruction of all hopes of the restoration of his King. This he wished to prevent ; and the revision of the Consti-

tution commended itself to him as the only safeguard against so threatening a peril.

The Republic had had its dogmatic defender in General Cavaignac, its too violent apologist in M. Michel de Bourges. The passionate member of the Mountain had not scrupled to vindicate the solidarity of the Convention by condoning its most terrible days, its most detestable dictators; but he had remained within the limits of brilliant but cloudy declamation. M. Pascal Duprat formulates with greater precision the opinions and designs of his party. He rejects the revision because those who desire a monarchy or the prolongation of Louis Napoleon's powers have made themselves its defenders. Speaking of the immense power of modern commonwealths, which according to him, has not been sufficiently insisted upon in this long debate, he ends his speech by saying: "Well, and what is it that is proposed to you to day? To resist this irresistible force. Take care; do not compel by imprudent measures—do not compel this sovereign force to assume its battle-name and call itself, *once more*, the Revolution."

All the perils of 1852 uprose in those threatening words of "this son of the Convention," as he styled himself; and the frenzied plaudits of the Mountain were less the homage to the talent which

M. Pascal Duprat had displayed than the ardent endorsement of the terrible menaces of which he had made himself the interpreter.

Notwithstanding some lapses into violence, the discussion had up till now been serious and dignified. It remained with M. Victor Hugo to make it deviate from its gravity. In an endless oration, the unfortunate poet who had been thrust into politics piled upon each other all the sophisms, all the social heresies, which long meditation had wrung from his brain festering with pride and ambition. Arousing the mirth of the Chamber at first, he ended by arousing its indignation. Handling everything without knowing, and always in this pretentious style, enamelled with antithesis and metaphor, he failed to inspire a conviction of his seriousness on any bench of the Chamber. The obligatory applause of the Mountain was nothing but the natural reward of his apostasy. The least prejudiced regretted such an aberration of intellect, and could only lament when they heard the new Mountaineer successively assail all our great social doctrines.

Profaning everything, even to that very past which he had smothered, as it were, with his incense, he extolled the merits and the glory of the Republic, as if it had always been his idol, and he

compelled his listeners to fling in his face that title of Peer of France he owed to the Monarchy which he loaded with injuries, to which he was under many obligations, whose flatterer, defender and pensioner he had finally been.* This pension of

* The manner of its bestowal as much as the pension itself was so graceful an act of Louis XVIII. that Victor Hugo should have never forgotten it. In 1822 the conspiracy of Saumur (the third of the name) broke out and implicated a young man named Delon, the son of an officer who had served under Victor Hugo's father. The poet offered the proscribed fugitive one a shelter, only he was inconsistent enough to address this letter to Delon's mother, and to simply put it in the post. Of course Delon never came, but what did come was a pension of twelve hundred francs from Louis XVIII. to the young author of the *Odes and Ballads*, who had just got married. Two years and a half afterwards, Victor Hugo had to request a favour of the then Director General of the Public Post, a very different functionary from the French Postmaster-General of the present day. Hugo was very kindly received, and the request was immediately granted. But M. Roger, who was a man of letters as well as a public functionary, would not let the opportunity slip of having a good chat with the poet, then already famous. "Do you know to what you owe your pension, my dear poet," asked M. Roger suddenly. "Well," answered Hugo, "I probably owe it to the little I have written." "Not a bit; shall I tell you to what you owe it? Do you remember the conspiracy of Saumur, and the letter you wrote to a young man named Delon, offering him the shelter and secrecy of your home?" This time Victor Hugo did not answer. He had written the letter between his four walls, had spoken to no one of it, and his nightcap—this confidant which Louis XI. maintained should be burned after one had confided a secret to it—his nightcap knew not of it, seeing that Victor Hugo probably wore no such headgear. "Well," resumed M. Roger, seeing that the poet did not answer, "this letter was shown to King Louis, who already knew you by your writings. 'So, so,' said the King; 'a great talent, and above all a good heart: we must reward this young man.' And he

two thousand francs which he owed to the munificence of Louis XVIII., and which he admitted to have regularly received from the privy purse, he was reminded of in the harshest terms; and the poet, crushed by the most damning proofs of his ungrateful recantations, could but attempt some justifications that justified nothing. Carried away by his vindictiveness, he proceeded to threats, and bade the Right of the Chamber when they crossed the spot (Place de la Concorde) where Louis XVI. and so many noble victims had perished, ponder the warnings of those bloody memories. After which he straightway attacked Louis Napoleon. His insults became so violent that the Assembly protested against such flagrant disregard of the most common conventionalities of debate.

“It’s a diatribe, and not a speech,” the President of the Chamber said to the speaker, who, notwithstanding the reminder, was none the less proud of what he considered a success. When the human ordered you a pension of twelve hundred francs.” In fact, the Bourbons had always shown themselves most considerate to Victor Hugo. A few days after the above mentioned conversation, Victor Hugo received the Legion of Honour from Charles X. Even in this gift the utmost delicacy was shown. Victor Hugo and Lamartine figured on the list of candidates for the honour presented to the King on public occasions. Charles X. struck out the two names. “Those names are too illustrious to be confounded with the others,” he said to Count Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld; “you will present a separate report.”—

mind arrives at a paroxysm of self-admiration like that at which M. Victor Hugo had arrived, all moral sense vanishes, and one sees praise in the most scathing public affront.

With serious people, with the intelligent portion of the nation, such a discourse required no reply ; it provided its own and most conclusive refutation. But the masses are too often taken in by this invective, by this inflated imagery, by these perfidious accusations. The Ministry felt it its duty to reply to this emphatic act of accusation ; and M. Baroche, Minister for Foreign Affairs, accepted the task. The Minister did not spare his blows. Judging, and with cause, that in France ridicule kills its man more effectually than the best of arguments, M. Baroche began by crushing the unfortunate poet beneath the weight of his satire. Comparing his fresh Republican convictions with his former Legitimist ardour, he recalled the qualification bestowed upon him of "the most Pindaric of Royalists ;" he showed him introducing himself to the Elysée, helping to found the famous Reactionary Committee of the Rue de Poitiers, and thus running through the gamut of opinion without the least effort. But M. Baroche had other corn to grind than to chastise M. Victor Hugo. He went to the core of the debate, and with serried logic de-

monstrated the opportunity of revision. He showed it to be the only means of foiling the many intrigues playing at cross purposes in the Chamber, the surest guarantee against this *Coup d'État* so often announced. He wound up his speech by saying:—

“Insist upon the lawful revision; vote it; imprison us in this law which we are accused of wishing to transgress. It is all we ask of you.

“For the sake of the country, do not reject this remedy in which she has placed her trust; I implore you, gentlemen, to remember—and I will conclude with these words—to remember the enormous responsibility you incur if you reject this demand for revision, which, in my opinion, will satisfy the true needs, the genuine wants, the real wish of the whole of the nation.”

Might not another loyal warning be perceived on the part of the supreme power in this warm persistency of M. Baroche. To any man of sense his words meant this: “We point out to you the lawful solution which will dispense us from having recourse to an act of authority; listen to our counsel, and every reason for a *Coup d'État* disappears.”

M. Dufaure was one of the most fervent *Constitutionnels* of the Chamber; he was under the impression that the validity of the origin of the Con-

stitution, the moral authority of the Constituent Assembly, was being questioned. He came to protest against the charge. Those circular letters of oppression of 1848, those abuses of power on the part of the agents of the Government, far from attributing any influence to them, he stigmatized them and maintained that they had produced an effect absolutely the reverse of what was expected from them. While admitting that the Constitution was in many respects imperfect in detail, he objected to make it a reason for its revision—in other words, for calling into question its essential doctrines. He wanted the maintenance of the Republic, and protested against the charge of its being distasteful to the country. He wound up his speech by maintaining that in the event of non-revision the country would not dare to resort to illegal measures by re-electing Louis Napoleon in 1852 in an unconstitutional manner. He carried his confidence much farther: he expressed the hope that the Prince himself would refuse to comply with the wish of the nation, and that thus, without commotion and without tumult, the will of France would be set at nought.

The debate was getting exhausted. Five weary days had enabled every opinion to fully ventilate itself. Above all had the extreme opinions been

thoroughly supported. M. Odilon Barrot came to close the discussion by bringing to the tribune words of moderation, prudence, and conciliation. After a sound exposition of constitutional doctrines, after a careful examination of the conditions which the acceptance or the refusal of the revision by the Assembly would entail upon the country, M. Barrot showed the Chamber the grave responsibilities to which a refusal would expose it, if this refusal led to political and social perturbation and agitation. To the Assembly, to its obstinacy and resistance, the country would attribute, and not without reason, the causes of the disorder from which she would suffer. If the orator had addressed a calm, ductile Assembly, unhardened by foregone conclusions, he would have obtained from it the revision of this Constitution, when he pointed out that it was its own as well as the nation's interest to grant it.

Had the least clear-sightedness been left to the Assembly, such language would have been listened to; but there are hours when every vestige of independence of mind disappears from the Chambers, when its members only listen to their own thoughts. Prudence, reason, truth lose their empire; passion takes their stead. And it is from those fatal dispositions that too often spring reso-

lutions which bind the fate of nations, when there is no superior hierarchical and constitutional authority, as is the case under a monarchy, that can be called in to exercise its control on those decisions, the results of such passion.

And in this kind of debate the Chamber was supreme; no power could control its decision; albeit that this sovereignty had undergone some sort of mutilation from the ingenious suspicion displayed in the framing of the Constitution of 1848. It was no longer half *plus* one of the suffrages that constituted a majority; a fourth of the votes sufficed to defeat the proposed revision and to exercise the sovereignty of refusal. The votes of the Assembly were divided as follows:—

Number of voters	724
Constitutional majority, <i>i.e.</i> three-fourths of the votes .	543
For the adoption of the measure	446
Against	278

The proposal having thus only united the ordinary majority, and not the constitutional majority, the Assembly rejected the motion for the revision of the Constitution.

But how much could there be left of a Constitution condemned by the country, condemned by the Chamber itself by a strong majority, and which only owed the prolongation of its precarious exist-

ence to the excessive precaution of the legislator, to the modification of the ordinary rules of voting of the Assembly, to the numerical and opinionated minority of Parliament? The Constitution and the Chamber had been engulfed at the same time by this exasperating and impolitic decision.

After such protracted debates, it might be imagined that the last word had been said on this vexed question.

Had not, in fact, the Chamber sufficiently showed its hostility against Louis Napoleon? Had it not loudly enough proclaimed its desire to exclude him from all combinations of the future? Had it not clearly indicated to the country its determined resolution to resist the manifestations of her preferences and intentions, which became more patent each day? On all those points it might have been believed that the cup was full; and yet to some cantankerous minds there seemed still further precautions to be taken. Petitions continued to flow to the Chamber; all the constituted bodies, the municipalities above all, asked, some the revision of the Constitution, others the prolongation of Louis Napoleon's powers; all showed very clearly their dread of the conflict which, in 1852, would fatally result from the existing dispositions of the Constitution of 1848, and their desire to let the reins

of power remain within the hands of the Prince. Those petitions and the movements whence they sprang constituted in the minds of the zealots of the Chamber a peril which it was imperative to exorcise without delay. In consequence of a discussion on this subject, and notwithstanding the assurances of M. Léon Faucher, who assuredly could not be suspected of being a fanatic in favour of the Prince, the Assembly adopted, by a majority of 333 against 320, the following amendment proposed by M. Baze :

“The National Assembly, while regretting that in certain localities the Administration, contrary to its duties, has used its influence to incite the citizens to petition, orders all further petitions to be deposited with the Committee of Preliminary Inquiry.”

This was both a fresh insult aimed at the Prince, a blaming of his Ministers, however prudent the latter had shown themselves face to face with this movement that passed over their heads, and a powerless and stupid warning to the country not to insist upon her wants and to cease troubling the Chamber with them.

A sorry spectacle, indeed, was this Chamber, thus pursuing by its intrigues, and at the cost of every humiliating contradiction, its purpose of excluding the Prince. To what illogical shifts had

it not been reduced already? At each phase it proclaimed the sovereignty of the nation; it was the fundamental dogma it hedged round with its veneration, which it placed above everything; and all its efforts tended to paralyze to this nation, pretended to be the sovereign, the use she meant to make of her sovereignty. In order to shield itself, for the purpose of resistance, behind this Constitution, the passion-swayed production of a Chamber born from the most evil days, of a Chamber elected under the pressure of terrorist agents, it wanted to perpetuate its laws, lest the country, restored to herself, restored to her genuine freedom, should substitute the language of reason, of prudence, and of truth, for that of mistrust, passion, and injustice.

To this people, pompously proclaimed to be a free people, a sovereign people, the supreme arbiter of the destinies of the country, the Chamber, blinded by its own hatred, said :

You wish to keep Prince Louis Napoleon at the head of the State. Well, we do not wish it.

You ask the revision of the Constitution to enable you to lawfully re-elect the Prince. We refuse you this revision, which would open the door to the free manifestation of your will.

You threaten us, so tenacious is your will, to

perpetuate the power on your head ; we are aware that in spite of our prohibition, in spite of the Constitution itself, this people, insubordinate to our tyranny, would proclaim you Chief of the State. We appeal to your abnegation of self and to your deferential submission to your relentless enemies : you will refuse this power which the country gives you, because some impotent enemies would rob you of it, to take it in your stead.

Was it not this they said to the Prince—was it not this they said to the country ? And is it surprising that both people and Prince crushed beneath their heel such presumptuous whims, such imbecile exactions, such revolting abuse of an expiring authority ?

In presence, then, of these resolutions of the Assembly—the refusal to revise the Constitution, the lawful interdict to re-elect Louis Napoleon—what was the latter's position ?

Two courses were open to him. To submit to this weak but vindictive coalition, incapable by reason of its own divisions to create any Government whatsoever ; to remain a passive looker-on of the convulsions of the country, and on the morrow of its ruin to cowardly shield himself behind the ill-will of the Chamber, behind the letter of the Constitution, in order to escape the terrible responsibility of having

left this generous nation to perish beneath the ruins without having held out a helping hand—this was the first alternative that presented itself to the Chief of the State, tied hand and foot by the text of the Constitution, inmeshed in the votes of the Chamber. Is it necessary to say that so guilty an acquiescence was not within the nature of Louis Napoleon?

What was the other course that commended itself to the Prince? For that one, instead of looking on behind the constitutional text at the agony of France, it was necessary to listen to the promptings of his heart, to raise his thoughts to the level of the peril itself, to appeal to his own courage, devotion and patriotism, to place himself at the head of this nation in distress, and to give her, as well as her deliverance, the complete liberty to dispose of herself, to elect the Government of her choice. This course, the only one that could be understood by a generous and lofty nature, we shall see that Louis Napoleon decided upon it from the moment that all lawful means were jealously and narrowly closed against him.

From that day war is openly declared; the two champions confront one another; the encounter is without quarter—one of them must perish. Let us see, in fact, how each one in this desperate duello

rehearses his blows, what will be the attitude of this great witness of the strife, the country herself. The country beholds the peril; she feels that the victory of the Prince means the saving of her, that his defeat entails her ruin; hence she seconds him with all her might. The departmental assemblies are scarcely met in their ordinary sessions, when with almost unanimous accord they renew their demands for the revision of the Constitution; they place themselves in open hostility against the Chamber, and once more afford the Chief of the State a powerful encouragement at the crucial moment.*

But it was not in company with M. Léon Faucher that one could resort to bold measures of resistance to the Chamber and appeals to the country. To the solution of an entirely new problem that might turn out to be dangerous, new and resolute men were wanted. We shall soon behold the last of the Ministerial evolutions of which the Chamber was a witness; we are to enter upon that active period of preparation for the great event which shall go down to history by the name of the 2nd December.

* Out of 85 Councils-General, 80 had asked the revision of the Constitution; three had abstained; only two had rejected the proposal, but by a very feeble minority. At that moment the department of the Seine had no Council-General.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIRST CONFIDENCES OF LOUIS NAPOLEON.

Resignation of the Léon Faucher Ministry.—Origin and nature of my relations with the Prince.—Louis Napoleon's letters; my interviews with him; his overtures with regard to the *Coup d'État*; their results.—The conditions under which the new Ministry was to be formed.—The Cabinet of the 26th October.

THE Prince had need of all his strength to sustain with advantage the struggle in which he was engaged with the Assembly. Even more than his own cause, that of the country lay wholly in his hands; such a responsibility imposed the duty of employing any and every of his weapons.

The law of the 31st May offered for all ordinary contingencies guarantees the worth of which the Prince by no means overlooked; but for the election of a Chief of the State, it seemed, at any rate, preferable to him to appeal to the whole of the nation, absolutely excepting none but those whom the law of the 15th March disqualified. Louis Napoleon went farther; and, always more democratic than those who surrounded and advised him, he preferred universal suffrage, without re-

strictions other than those resulting from legal disabilities, to the protective law of the 31st May. Hence he yielded to personal inclinations rather than to a desire for popularity when he decided to ask the repeal of the law of the 31st May.

The first hint of such a resolution would, as a matter of course, separate him from his Ministry, and 'create without commotion a crisis that would justify its removal. At the first announcement by the Prince of his wish to lay the project before the Chamber, M. Léon Faucher instantly tendered his resignation, and the whole Cabinet followed his example. It would be useless to deny that by the same blow the Prince very skilfully appropriated to himself the benefit of a popular proposal. The army wherewith to fight the Chamber was the nation, and the nation asked for the abrogation of the law of the 31st May. Hence, in laying before the Chamber the proposal it would infallibly reject, he was about to create for it a new title to the nation's dislike.

Where in this grave conjuncture was the material for a new Ministry to come from? From the Chamber? It was impossible to constitute from among its members a Cabinet that could command a majority; and besides, the moment for an act of authority seemed so near that it mattered little whether one

had or had not a majority in the Assembly. The Prince decided upon a combination which more than any other seemed to meet the difficulties henceforth inevitable. He would unite in one and the same Ministry men invested with missions apparently similar but absolutely different in reality—some having all his confidence, and being decided to follow him to the last in his conflict with the Assembly. Those he intended to entrust with the essential portfolios—those of the Interior and for War; and the others he chiefly meant to look to the despatch of public business and to bear the brunt of the debates in the Chamber for the time being.

From that moment I became so intimately bound up with the events the development of which we shall watch, that I cannot, however embarrassing it may be to always speak of one's self, shirk the obligation of describing the rôle the will of the Prince and circumstances reserved for me in this interesting period of the history of my country. I must, therefore, for a moment leave the facts with which we are occupied to explain by virtue of what title I took part in them. Besides, those few words will bring us back to the point where we left off; the past will rapidly lead us to the present, and not without throwing some light on the latter.

I have often been asked the circumstances that procured me the honour of having been called by Louis Napoleon to second him in his great enterprise of the 2nd December. I now beg to answer the question.

Before 1848 I had not known the Prince; I had had no relations with any of the members of his family. At the Revolution of February I had left my modest functions of sub-prefect at Beaune, and during the preliminaries of the election of the 10th December I did what did the majority of the Conservatives there, where they could dispose of some influence: I carried on the propaganda of reason in favour of the candidature of Louis Napoleon.

A friend, Count Joachim Clary, proposed to introduce me to the Prince. My first visit dates from November, 1848. In January, 1849, I re-entered the public service as sub-prefect at Boulogne; and in October of the same year, in consequence of some incidents that elicited the approval of the Chief of the State, I was called to the prefecture of the department of the Allier.

The department of the Allier was the centre of a revolutionary organization which linked five or six of the adjacent departments together. More than once I had been enabled to obtain at Moulins information which was peculiarly in-

teresting. The accident of my position enabled me to collect a series of facts that extended over an entire region, one of the most agitated in France.

In consequence of this, direct communication had been established between the Prince and myself, at his express desire, and my correspondence with him became sufficiently regular. I was interrogated upon the effect of such and such a Government measure; more than once I took the initiative in communicating my impressions. We were living in abnormal times; the Ministers had two masters—the Assembly and the Prince: no one was ignorant that they were two rival forces. The interest of the country seemed to me bound up with the Prince, who had a clearly defined aim which he might accomplish, rather than with the Assembly, whose divisions were a peril, and which was incapable of conducting us to a satisfactory solution. The exact knowledge of the currents of opinion in the provinces was a valuable guide to the Chief of the State; one might be allowed to suppose that his Government did not inform him in this respect with absolute impartiality. In supplying, for my part, this lamentable deficiency, I felt that I was performing a duty. I perceived from the confidential replies I received from the Prince that on his

side I was the object of his favourable notice. He did not delay to give me proof of it. During one of my journeys to Paris, he was kind enough to ask which situation I would prefer in the event of my leaving Moulins. I had expressed my wish to remain actively employed; a more important department than that of the Allier was my sole ambition. It was not long before my wishes were satisfied. The 7th March, 1851, I received the following letter from the Prince.

“Monsieur le Préfet,

“I have appointed you Prefect at Toulouse; and this nomination, of which I desire to be the first to inform you, you owe it to your constant energy, to your clearly defined and openly avowed attitude,—in short, to the sentiments you express in your last letter. You wish for an important populous centre. Toulouse is the principal one in the south, and the one whence, in the event of difficulties arising, you could usefully exercise your influence upon several neighbouring departments. You have succeeded in understanding my policy; you have applied it with success. Continue it in the Upper Garonne. Loyalty towards all parties, firmness against all, and, should they dare to come to an open conflict, energetic resolve in opposing them—such must ever

be your line of conduct. I rely upon your intelligent devotion.

“Believe me, etc., etc.,

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

Toulouse, like Moulins, was a very centre of conspiracy. It was at Toulouse that the password of Demagogy was given to all the departments of the south-west; to those of the Aude, the East Pyrenees, the Lower Pyrenees, the Upper Pyrenees, the Tarn, the Tarn and Garonne, the Ariège, the Gers—even to that of the Aveyron. My direct communications with the Prince, who wished to be personally informed of the real state of public feeling, were continued there also.

In the south-west the agitation was at fever heat. The advent of 1852 was regarded by all the demagogues as the period for a general uprising. They prepared for it with very little mystery. The end to be gained was in no way disguised. They were determined to revive a Revolution that had failed in 1848, one that had been diverted from its original purpose on the 10th December, by the thorough victory of the social revolution. Their organisation was powerful. The secret societies were properly constituted; their ramifications extended to the most distant communes, the most out-of-the-way

hamlets. The leaders were everywhere men of action, ready to give the signal for every excess ; it was an army in good form, eager to march at the word of command. In the camp of those implacable foes of society there was a complete unity. Unfortunately, facing those vigorously disciplined forces, there was a divided Conservative party, divided throughout the country as it was in the Chamber. Consequently the public mind began to grow very uneasy.

The more I studied the situation, the more I noticed that everywhere authority was being undermined. The spirit of resistance and revolt increased with every hour. The revolutionary party essayed its forces, and by these means tested public opinion. Sometimes a few of the most impatient went beyond the instructions of their leaders and as far as revolt. This happened in the little town of Aspet, and led to some very serious disturbances. A few words relating to this incident will give a sufficiently clear idea of the state of ferment the revolutionary spirit had arrived at.

In a tussle of the gendarmes with a disorderly crowd of loafers and idlers, the Mayor, a retired officer and a knight of the Legion of Honour, had taken sides against the former ; he had liberated their prisoners, and the gendarmes had in his presence been insulted by the populace and

threatened with violence. At the first news of the conflict I hastened to Aspet, escorted by two brigades of gendarmerie and followed closely by a squadron of cavalry. Immediately on my arrival at the Mairie, whither I had been followed by a hooting and angry crowd, I had the Mayor and the leading actors in the scene arrested and conveyed to Saint-Gaudens, the administrative seat of the arrondissement. Scarcely had I got there with them, when a gendarme came to warn me of the attempt to invade the prison and to carry off the prisoners. The squadron of cavalry had not arrived yet; we had only three brigades of horse gendarmerie to face the storm. To the summons to disperse the mob answered by a shower of projectiles. The Procureur of the Republic was hurt, and a gendarme fell at my side seriously wounded. I ordered the gendarmerie to charge; and a few moments afterwards the prison and those it held were safe from the enterprise of the rioters. Numerous arrests were made, and severe sentences vindicated the majesty of the law in a few days. Though there were no fewer than four or five thousand adherents of the Mountain in this foolhardy attempt, it was by no means important from a practical point of view; but it was a grave symptom. It was but too evident that at the first signal every one

would be at his post in the ranks of the Revolution, and only too ready to act without weighing the danger incurred by resistance.

If the authorities had not been particularly vigilant, incidents like that of Aspet would have been frequent enough. In Toulouse itself, in spite of its strong garrison, an attempt at insurrection on the most futile pretext had occurred. It had been suppressed without bloodshed, but it showed once more the daring of the demagogues. All these facts, taken as a whole, proved a source of information to the Government, of which it could not take advantage too quickly.

I by no means hid from the Minister the perils in store for society at the expiration of the Presidential term in 1852. I recommended the greatest vigilance, but left him to find the remedy to the evil I pointed out to him. I did not succeed, perhaps, in sufficiently disguising my idea of the only possible solution; a solution which M. Léon Faucher, a fanatical Parliamentarian, indignantly rejected. Certain it is that I incurred his remonstrances; their severe character compelled me to complain to the Chief of the State. A letter from the Prince, dated 18th July, 1851, afforded me full satisfaction in that respect; it was in his own handwriting, and read as follows:—

ÉLYSÉE NATIONAL, 18th July, 1851.

“My dear Monsieur de Maupas,

“I regret that you should incur reproach where you deserve nothing but praise. But the most intelligent minds are not perfect, and one must bear with their foibles.

“In any case you may rely upon me, who appreciate at their just worth your loyalty, your personal merits, and your devotion.

“Therefore believe me

“Most affectionally yours,

“LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

Time passed; only a few months separated us from the month of May, 1852. To wait was to increase the danger by giving the enemy time to complete his organization—it became necessary to act. The 22nd July, on the morrow of the throwing out of the Bill for the revision of the Constitution, I pointed out to the Chief of the State the danger of respite. I impressed upon him the necessity for energetic and decisive action. I indicated in all their details the only means to save the country. All parliamentary and strictly lawful methods were powerless; the country had to be appealed to directly, to be directly entrusted with the care of its own destiny. The Constitution of 1848 pro-

vided in its first article that, "The sovereign power is lodged in the collective body of the French citizens." Therefore it was the legal sovereign that should be appealed to, to resolve this important question which preoccupied and agitated the whole of France. No doubt the Constitution did not give the President of the Republic the right to directly consult the country in this plebiscitary form; but salvation lay in this method only, and to apply it no obstacles should be considered. The nation's vote should say whether she intended to absolve or condemn the enterprise.

It was only on the 19th September that the Prince replied; and his language, already so transparent, lent a vast importance to the rumours that were current in well-informed political circles. He said, in fact, that the week previous we had been on the eve of what was conventionally termed the *Coup d'État*, but that dissensions which sprung up at the eleventh hour between those entrusted with its execution had only prevented its realisation.* Louis Napoleon's letter was not entrusted to the

* General de Saint-Arnaud, who had the most important rôle in this projected *Coup d'État*, refused his co-operation at the last moment. He was influenced by two reasons: the scheme appeared to him badly conceived, and the devotion of M. Carrier, the then Prefect of Police seemed to him, to say the least, doubtful. Deprived of his chief auxiliary, the Prince had postponed his plan.

post. On account of its absolutely confidential character, it had been given by him to Count de Campaigno, adjunct to the Mayor of Toulouse, who on his arrival had sent it to me by private messenger to Bagnères-de-Luchon, where I was staying at the moment. From its perusal it will be seen that the Prince's mind was fully made up at this date; he held himself ready to act if circumstances compelled him. Subjoined is his letter.

ELYSÉE, 19th September, 1851.

“My dear Monsieur de Maupas,—

“I take the opportunity of M. de Campaigno's departure to remind you of the letter you wrote to me in July. Your advice will receive a favourable solution very soon. I rely upon you at Toulouse to start a salutary movement; but the moment you have accomplished your task in the south you will be called to more important functions, because I feel happy to have men like yourself to aid me in saving the country.

“Pray accept my assurance of profound esteem,
LOUIS NAPOLEON.”

A very few days afterwards I received from M. Léon Faucher, then Minister of the Interior, a telegraphic message asking me to come to him without delay.

On reaching Paris I found, besides the order of the Minister to repair immediately to his private room, an invitation to dine at St. Cloud for the same evening. The silence of the Minister of the Interior towards me for several weeks warned me that he had some grievance against me. I anticipated the nature of it, and at his first words I knew that I had not been mistaken. After some sententious remarks on the necessity of giving the country to understand that the Government repudiated all idea of a *Coup d'État*, M. Léon Faucher went on to reproach me for not having sufficiently associated myself with that part of the Ministerial policy at Toulouse. "People," he said, "should not be in the slightest doubt about the attitude of the Ministry." The prefects who were suspected in their departments of favouring a *Coup d'État* ought to be shifted; he deemed it his duty to propose to the Chief of the State to send me to Montpellier, "where," he said, making use of the stereotyped expression, "he had need of my services." It in no way suited me to accept a situation inferior to the one I occupied. I refused point blank, and assured M. Léon Faucher that except a post equivalent or superior to my present one I should accept nothing. Our parting was icy, and foretold a rupture.

A different reception awaited me at St. Cloud. After dinner the Prince took me into the room next to the drawing-room. "Have you seen Faucher?" he said. "I have just left him, Monseigneur." "Well, what did he say to you?" asked the Prince with a kind of bantering smile. I told him in a few words the conversation I had had with the Minister of the Interior; I alluded to the proposal he had made and my reply to it. "I have another proposal to make to you," resumed the Prince: "will you take the portfolio of the Interior?"

I was little prepared for such an offer. No ambitious thought had entered my mind. My advice to the Chief of the State only aimed at being useful to his cause; I had never dreamed of making it the prelude to political elevation. The Prince failed not to notice my surprise and he developed his idea.

"I fully appreciate the men who serve me at the present moment," he said. "I value their talent; but they think differently from me; they perceive the saving of the country where I see her destruction. To continue to be dragged along by this Assembly, to waste in useless quarrels the time between now and 1852, is to merely march blindly to an inevitable catastrophe. There must be an end of it; we must act; we must at all cost save this

unhappy country, which is making straight for a precipice. You have courage and decision; they are the qualities necessary to the coming situation. It is because of this that I have thought of you."

The final thought was easily perceptible through the few reservations in which it was still wrapt up. The mission of an appeal to physical force was evidently allotted to the Ministry the Prince wished to constitute. But it was not destined to act immediately; there were still certain stages to be gone through; and I wanted to be more fully informed before taking a decision upon so grave a matter. Still, I did not wish to wait till next morning to tell the Prince the first objections that presented themselves to my mind. They were summed up in a few words. Courage and decision were assuredly and above all indispensable to the members of the new Ministry; but if they had to show themselves men of action at a given moment, they had first of all to face difficulties of a different order. Party tactics had reached to a degree of violence in the Assembly such as to make the conflicts of the tribune a necessary and prominent preoccupation for the future. Parliamentary experience and oratorical aptitude were, therefore, qualities of primary importance in the present situation. I could not very well answer for myself in the

tribune, seeing that I had never tried. My too rapid preferment, and even my extreme youth, would be severely visited upon me. I was ready to accept an active mission, and of immediate activity; but I felt a dislike to have to go through all the apprenticeship of parliamentary procedure.

It was equally important to me to know the colleagues with whom I was expected to share the grave responsibilities to be entered upon. The Prince only named General de Saint-Arnaud. It was plain that, except the future Minister for War, I was the only one to whom he had confided his intention to change his Cabinet and to give his Government an absolutely new aspect. The strictest secrecy was enjoined and the interview adjourned till the next day.

Next morning, at eleven o'clock, I went back to St. Cloud. After breakfast the Prince invited me to accompany him in his walk in the park, and the conversation of the evening before was resumed.

My first impressions had been confirmed by reflection. I requested at once that the portfolio of the Interior might be given to some one else. I added to my previous observations a consideration which in fact was only the development of the former. The men willing to engage in decisive action were only a small number; it was necessary,

therefore, to husband their strength—not to risk its waste in parliamentary struggles before the hour for striking the final blow had come. Hence I asked to remain at Toulouse until the moment when,* everything being prepared, the signal for action would be given. But the Prince's determination took a new form; and his plan, which I had easily guessed the night before, was completely disclosed.

We had returned to the Prince's private room; he laid aside all reticence and opened his mind freely.

“The actual situation,” he said, “is too strained to continue much longer than a few weeks. If I do not act, my adversaries will forestall me. They have neither sufficient authority to carry the army with them nor the support of public opinion; their attempt to strike a blow would miscarry; civil war would be its inevitable result; this unhappy country would be given up to anarchy; we should see the horrors of '93 enacted over again. There is only my name which carries sufficient weight to reassure the country and influence the army. But I cannot do everything by myself. I want a few resolute men to help me to accomplish my task. A few days ago I wanted to put into execution the plan which I still hope to realise. I was not backed. Differences of opinion as to the best

means of executing my plan made it miscarry. But to-day, more than ever, I am resolved to act."

The Prince then explained to me both the plan that had failed and the one he had decided upon. After which, becoming more animated than I have ever seen him since, he added, almost textually:*

"I find myself on the bank of a large moat full of water; it is no doubt difficult to cross, but I perceive on the opposite bank the salvation of my country. To attempt the obstacle by myself would no doubt be a rash enterprise. Get some men to second you, and you will succeed, I am told. Well, those men whom I seek and cannot find, I would say to them: I shall give you the example; I will place myself at your head, I shall jump into the water first; but for Heaven's sake follow me, and the country will be saved. Well, my dear M. de Maupas, this is all I have to say to you, and now you know what I expect from your devotion."

A cordial grip of the hand told the Prince that I could not but reply to this thorough confidence save by an assurance of unreserved co-operation.

* I was in the habit whenever I was to have the honour of being received by the Chief of the State, to briefly note the different points to be submitted to him. I never failed at the end of the interview to commit its substance to writing. Hence I am enabled to give almost textually the conversation I have reported. On account of its importance, I had taken to record its precise terms immediately on my return to Paris.

I must tell the whole truth. During this interview the features of Louis Napoleon, generally so calm, showed traces of deep emotion ; while he was speaking to me tears started to his eyes. You who so outrageously slander this generous nature, believe me that if it had been given to you to listen to these expressions of sincere conviction, far from perceiving an ambitious revelation, you would have recognised the accents of the noblest patriotism in them.

“Seeing that you are determined to act, I am yours,” I said to the Prince; “but let us look at the practical side of the grave question which justly occupies your mind, and waive all personal considerations. What you wish to accomplish is not an exclusively military act of authority, such as you are being credited with. You do not wish to be proclaimed Emperor by your soldiers; you wish to associate the nation with your enterprise. You wish to owe your authority to her only ; you only wish to transgress a dangerous and injurious law to enter immediately within another, salutary and beneficial ; you wish civil authority to bear the burden of this enterprise with the military one. If you wish all this, the question becomes a clearly defined one, and I will take the liberty to point out to you its practical side.

“Every change which since the beginning of the century has been accomplished in the government of France was made in Paris; what Paris had done, France has accepted. This time it will be the same. Hence we must occupy ourselves with Paris first of all. Paris is the seat of action and the key to success in one. And in Paris at those critical moments when the destinies of the nation are at stake two forces only share this action and its responsibility—the army and the police. The Prefect of Police disposes of the authority to prevent, and the Minister for War holds in his hand the power to repress. The Minister of the Interior has no direction save in the departments; his rôle only begins when Paris has given its fiat; he only contributes subsequently and passively to the sanction of an accomplished fact, for it is within time-honoured tradition that, while being ostensibly under his orders, the Prefect of Police acts entirely independently of him. Therefore it is upon the Prefecture of Police that the decisive part in the execution of this plan will devolve. The success may depend upon the measures taken by it. And,” I added in conclusion, “in presence of such conjunctures, I ask the Prince to make use of my devotion at the Prefecture of Police.”

At these last words our understanding was

complete, and I left Louis Napoleon pledged to him under conditions which I had myself determined, and which he had pleased to accept with the liveliest expressions of gratitude. I had only made one reservation. I did not care to fill the post of Prefect of Police for any length of time; I only accepted the situation with the express mission to prepare and execute the plan decided upon. The moment events had been accomplished I regained my liberty.

But in this important conversation we had, as it were, anticipated events. The solution of the Ministerial question had not been touched upon; it had only been decided that my nomination should be made known at the same time with the nomination of the new Cabinet.

It was not an easy task to constitute a Cabinet on so ill-defined a field of action as that chosen by the Chief of the State. Negotiations progressed with difficulty. M. de Persigny and Colonel Fleury, both confidants of the Prince, had been mainly charged with them. An understanding was difficult to establish, because the Prince having decided to form only a Ministry of transition, he naturally withheld his real intentions from the men he wished to appoint, and they failed to see a sufficiently defined programme.

The repeal of the law of the 31st May—that was to be the first stage of the campaign. “And then?” asked those who were invited to co-operate. “And then,” answered the President, “we’ll be guided by circumstances.”

The difficulty of forming a Cabinet threatened to overthrow all the plans decided upon between the Prince and myself. I had only accepted the Prefecture of Police on the condition that what was called the *Coup d'État* should be attempted without delay, and at the first favourable opportunity. On the other hand, the Ministers selected, or on the point of being selected, made it an express condition to their acceptance of office that they should be allowed to set the Chamber's mind at rest against any such attempt. I had been obliged to tell the President that if any such permission was granted them I should have to ask him to absolve me from my promise. I even recommended to him, to take my place at the Prefecture of Police, M. Pietri, the then Prefect of the department of the Ariège, whose devotion was beyond doubt. This was the actual position of affairs. For the last two days I had ceased my visits to St. Cloud, and was already preparing to return to Toulouse, when I received a message to come immediately to the Prince.

The question had again changed its aspect. The men who insisted upon the promise to remain strictly within the law had been given up; a Ministry had been found that did not impose this condition. The Prince remained free, and he fully came back to his original plans. In his idea the Ministry was only one of transition, whose sole mission consisted in asking the repeal of the law of the 31st May. This once done, we would set about business entirely independent of it—General de Saint-Arnaud and myself being the only ones charged with preparations for the grand event and their execution. At last, and after much shifting, they had come back to the only possible decision: a grave one, no doubt, but the legitimate justification and urgent need of which we have already shown, and shall prove again. Under those circumstances I again accepted the Prefecture of Police; and M. Pietri, who on my refusal had been called to Paris, without being aware of the motive, was rewarded for his sudden journey by becoming my successor at Toulouse.

The next day, 26th October, the *Moniteur* published the undermentioned list of the Ministry:

MM. MARQUIS DE TURGOT, Foreign Affairs.

De THORIGNY, Interior.

MM. CORBIN, Justice.*

GENERAL DE SAINT-ARNAUD, War.

COUNT DE CASABIANCA, Agriculture and
Commerce.

BLONDEL, Finances.

LACROSSE, Public Works.

GIRAUD, Public Education.

FOURTOUL, Marine.

DE MAUPAS, Prefect of Police.

At the same time that my nomination appeared in the *Moniteur*, I received from M. de Persigny the following letter :—

“PARIS, Sunday, 26th October, 1851. 11 o'clock.

“I have the pleasure to inform you that by an ordinance of this day the President of the Republic has appointed you Prefect of Police. Enclosed is a list of the new Ministry.

“Pray believe me, &c.,

“F. DE PERSIGNY.”

I quote this letter, though of little importance in itself, to show which was the part taken by M. de Persigny. He recommended the nomination of the principal members of the Cabinet and high functionaries, as the Minister charged with the formation of

* The 1st November, M. Daviel, Procureur-General at Rouen, was called to the Ministry of Justice in lieu of M. Corbin, who had declined.

the Cabinet would have done himself. The Cabinet of the 26th October was in fact almost wholly his work. Thus, in consequence of my refusal to take the portfolio of the Interior, the Prince had given up the idea of having two confidants of his inmost thoughts within the Council itself. General de Saint-Arnaud remained the sole Minister initiated to his plans; the other depository of his confidence was at the Prefecture of Police.

From this will be seen that the dissensions which had arisen a month before between the Prince and General de Saint-Arnaud had given place to renewed relations of trust. Colonel Fleury had been the skilful negotiator of this adjustment; and if the young colonel, who became one of the most important personages of the Empire, rendered numerous and eminent services to his sovereign later on, the one he rendered him then must remain the most precious of all. Colonel Fleury, after having given, as it were, to Louis Napoleon a valiant and able general, a man of heart and of action, had now brought him back to the Prince once more.*

* We shall show later on how it was Colonel Fleury who pointed out to Louis Napoleon General de Saint-Arnaud as combining more than any other the indispensable qualities for the important function of Minister for War at the decisive moment, and how again it was Colonel Fleury who prevailed on the General to devote himself to the cause of the Prince.

CHAPTER XI.

PLANNING THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

First deliberations at St. Cloud, between the Prince, the Minister for War, and myself.—The *Coup d'État* eventually decided on.—The respective rôles of the Ministry for War and the Prefecture of Police.—M. Carlier's Plans: their worth.—The National Guard.—The true appreciation of this institution.—The plan I proposed.—Preventive measures: their necessities.—The definite plan in view of a *Coup d'État*.

THE Prince had pledged General de Saint-Arnaud and myself to the most absolute secrecy; his categorical command had prohibited all conversation between us on the subject. Did the President fear that an inquisitive and invisible ear might, in spite of ourselves, catch a few words of our conversation? Or did he simply wish all further plans to be determined between us to be first of all submitted to him in our subsequent conferences? Did he wish to avoid the probable accord between his two auxiliaries, regarding it as a possible and greater difficulty to the adoption of his own plans? At any rate, his recommendation of absolute silence

was so peremptory that we considered it imperative to abide by it. During this period of the formation of the Cabinet we had been several times thrown together, but had carefully abstained from all allusions to the confidences of the Prince. It was not our secret, and it was but natural that we should respect his wishes with regard to it, even to the verge of exaggeration.

One evening, when we had dined at St. Cloud and the Prince had had with each of us a private interview on the events of the future, we, General Saint-Arnaud and I, returned to Paris in the same carriage. As was perfectly natural, both our minds were full of the grave subject discussed with the Prince; and the temptation to exchange ideas, to make at least some allusion, would have been pardonable. We remained faithful to our injunction. Still, when we left each other we shook hands in a manner not indulged every day by ordinary folk; but not a word emphasised our mute expression of cordiality; the hand-grip was our sole and tacit show of confidence.

A few days later, and very shortly after the formation of the Cabinet of the 26th October, the Prince, believing the hour of action to be near, summoned us both together, not only to free us from our promise of silence towards each other, but

to confer all three, to devise means, and to finally settle our plan. The first words of the interview are present to my memory as if I had only heard them an hour ago. "Have you talked about what I confided to you?" asked the Prince. On our reply in the negative, he thanked us. "Secrecy is the first condition of success; I see that both of you can keep silent," he added.

In this first interview everything was sketched out, but no more. Only such points as allowed of no discussion were settled. It was admitted that an understanding with the Assembly was impossible, that the present situation could not be prolonged without risk, that an appeal to the country was the only possible way out of the blind alley in which we were imprisoned, and that means must be found to enable the country herself to decide by her own verdict the grave questions pending—those which the Assembly refused to solve.

The Prince had informed us of the machinations of his enemies; he had specially communicated to us certain reports from which it clearly resulted that General Changarnier, the real leading spirit of the plot against the Elysée, had been on the point of taking the offensive. The danger was becoming imminent; there was not a moment to lose, because the Chamber resumed its sittings on November 4th,

and the excitement was such amongst the most turbulent of the majority, that the most seditious resolutions might be expected. We had to be ready to defend ourselves, to even act spontaneously at the first resumption of the threats and the plans of action of the conspirators of the Chamber. It was agreed that the work of preparation for what was to be done should only be pursued between the Prince, the Minister for War, and the Prefect of Police, and that no member of the Council should be associated with it. Upon the latter would devolve the transaction of current affairs, the debates in the Assembly; upon us the preparations for decisive action and the fixing of the most opportune day to act. Finally, it was agreed that we should without delay begin the careful study of the means at our disposal, and the conditions in which they could be best employed. Our reports upon these questions would form the subject of our next discussion.

General de Saint-Arnaud was, in view of an armed resistance or aggression, to settle the disposal of his troops, and select for each position the general and the regiments most fit to cope with the incidents that might occur. In fact, it was a carefully considered plan of battle that had to be settled. In this scheme was to be included not

only Paris, but a considerable zone of its environs—Versailles, St. Germain, or, more correctly, all the military forces within a radius of five-and-twenty leagues from the capital.

The experience of the past had taught us, in the first place, not to let the troops occupy the same position for more than a few hours, thereby avoiding all inclinations to fraternise with the population and the fatigue of too prolonged a station. To renew the posts at comparatively frequent intervals was the first condition of safety. To ensure this result the disposal of an effective force thrice as strong as that engaged in a general action was indispensable. With eighteen thousand men the chief strategic points of Paris might be occupied; all possible eventualities in case of uprising could be faced. Hence, to renew, in case of need, all the positions thrice within the twenty-four hours fifty-four thousand men were wanted. Those fifty-four thousand men General de Saint-Arnaud was in a position to collect without arousing attention.

The commissariat was to play a great part also in an eventual struggle. If in our wars with a foreign nation one of the first conditions of success is to have plentiful supplies for our armies—not to let the soldier want for clothes, ammunition, food, or for anything that ensures his comfort and

security—assuredly those legitimate wants should be abundantly provided for him in the case of a war in the streets, always a formidable trial to an army.

Face to face with the foreigner the soldier takes no count of his privations; impulse silences all calculations. If he defies hunger and thirst, and throws himself headlong in the strife, he is merely impelled by the over-excitement of patriotism. The great motors of the soul electrify his courage; he cannot fraternise with the enemy, he can only march against him.

In the war of the street, on the contrary, the temptation to fraternise with the groups that surround him besets the soldier under the most deceptive form. If the mob boldly attack him, the response is short and sweet; but very often, before the struggle begins, the troops remain in position awaiting their final orders, and it is at such times that the most pernicious colloquies are engaged in. Nothing is neglected to gain the sympathies of the trooper.* His wants are espied and almost forestalled; victuals, clothing, fuel in

* A case not exactly in point, but nevertheless showing the value of M. de Maupas' observations. I quote from Alexandre Dumas' "*Mémoires*;" the great novelist is the hero of his own story. It is an episode from the Revolution of 1830:—"As we were going to the Place de Grève, we took by the Rue Guénégaud, the Pont-Neuf, and

inclement seasons, everything, is lavished upon him by the people, if the chief has been shortsighted the Quai de l'Horloge. Nothing seemed to stop our progress, somewhat accelerated by the noise of gun and rifle discharge, when on reaching the Quai aux Fleurs, we found ourselves face to face with a whole regiment. It was the 15th Light Infantry. There being no chance of attacking fifteen hundred men with thirty rifles and ammunition for about fifty shots, we came to a stop. Nevertheless, seeing that the soldiery seemed not disposed to take the offensive against us, whilst telling my men to halt, I advanced towards the regiment, my musket shouldered, and making signs that I wished to speak to the officer in charge. A captain came to the front. 'What do you wish, Monsieur?' he asked me. 'A passage for me and my men.' 'Whither are you going?' 'To the Hôtel de Ville.' 'What for?' 'What for! To fight of course.' The captain began to laugh. 'Really, M. Dumas,' he said, 'I did not think you so mad as all that.' 'Ah, you know me,' I replied. 'I was on duty at the Odéon one night when they played *Christine*; I had the pleasure of seeing you there.' 'In that case let us talk like friends.' 'That's what we are doing, I think.' 'Then tell me why I am mad?' 'You are mad because you run the risk of being killed, and because it is not your trade to be killed; you are mad because you ask us to let you pass, which you know very well we shall not do. Besides, look what would happen if we did,' he said, pointing to some poor fellows carried by on a stretcher. 'But then what are you doing here?' I remonstrated. 'A sad thing enough, M. Dumas, our duty. Luckily, the regiment has no other instructions at present than to stop the circulation. We confine ourselves to this, as you see. As long as no one fires on us, we'll fire on nobody. Go and tell this to your men, and let them go home quietly. I pray you to do so, and to use all your influence.' 'I thank you for the advice, Monsieur,' I said, laughing, 'but I doubt whether I have this influence.' With this I prepared to go, when the officer called me back: '*A propos*,' he said, 'when are we to have the *première* of *Antony*? Is not that the title of your new piece?' 'The *première* will be when we have finished this Revolution; because I was told at the Ministry of the Interior that nothing short of a Revo-

enough to overlook these wants. Good offices are multiplied; women, the children themselves, co-operate in this work of seduction. The trooper lends his ear to the advances of the diplomatist rioter. This soldier, who does not quite so clearly see the duty he is to discharge here as he would on the battle-field, this soldier is told that he should always fight for the welfare of the country and for liberty; the insurrection is invested with the most noble motives; his heart is appealed to; his doubts are aroused, his courage is shaken, his faith is surprised in order to paralyze his action. Once those first bonds of fraternity perfidiously established, he asks himself whether he can reply with bullets to the largess he has received. The soldier who argues ceases to be a safe soldier; and when the chief gives his orders, he finds, first hesitation—then refusal, and finally the defection of his men,

lution would wring the permission for my piece from the authorities.' The officer shook his head. 'I am afraid, Monsieur, that the piece will remain in your desk.' 'Well, Captain, I am of a different opinion; so here is my address; pray remind me to send you tickets for the *première* when you see the piece announced.'"

Thus far the narrative of Alexandre Dumas. It seemed to have struck neither the great novelist nor the captain of the 15th Light Infantry that Dumas was virtually a rebel. They had enacted insurrection and talked theatre, like the jolly, light-hearted Frenchmen they were. This sufficed. Comment is unnecessary, especially when the interview is read by the light of M. de Maupas' remarks.—*Trans.*

who give up their arms to march with those whom they were intended to oppose.

Both in 1830 and 1848 the army had afforded sad instances of this truth. At those periods the supreme power had not been able to surround itself with sufficient troops; and the soldier, compelled to double his efforts in order to supply the deficiency of numbers, without receiving in exchange the material necessities of the struggle—the soldier received from the people what he failed to get from his chiefs: he fraternized instead of fighting; and the dynasty fell without having been able to defend itself.

Such lessons were not to be lost. Quantity was one of the essential conditions: we had it. Supplies of all kinds were also there in abundance. We were to have the most precise instructions upon all those questions at our next meeting.

I, on my side, was to furnish a report on the state of parties, on their forces, on their material resources. I was also to give a summary of the state of public opinion, and specify in terms, as far as possible, our probable position at the moment of action. I had also to draw up a statement of the forces at my disposal and the part I would allot to each; furthermore, to submit a detailed and collective plan of the measures to prevent or to

paralyze resistance. To prevent resistance, to stay the explosion, such is ever the task of the Prefecture of Police in troublous moments. What services can it not render in that way, what disasters can it not prevent !

Such were the first items of information to be obtained, as far as the Ministry for War and the Prefecture of Police went. Those principal points were to be examined in common. Each of us fully informed upon all things would find a precious guarantee of safety in the knowledge.

At our second meeting, all that had been indicated was ready; we therefore could give our plans a sufficiently precise shape. General de Saint-Arnaud had found a carefully drawn plan of *arrangements to be taken in the event of a conflict* at the Ministry for War. It had been prepared in the event of contingencies that might surprise the chief power. Save for a few modifications, it could remain the same. General Renaud, a brave and illustrious soldier of our African campaigns, was selected to replace General de Saint-Arnaud in his command of the 2nd Division, to the left of the Seine; the remaining commands had been given to trusted chiefs—to the Canroberts, Carrelets, Bourgons, Levasseurs, de Courtigis, de Cottés, Sambouls, Foreys, and other valiant generals. From a military point of view, we might have begun immediately. As for the spirit of the army

its commander, General Magnan, answered for it; and his word was as trustworthy as his courage.

The organisation of the different branches of the Prefecture is arranged in so perfect a fashion that a few days suffice to become familiar with this vast administration. Hence I had been able to rapidly acquaint myself with the principal points it was necessary to know. The state of opinion in Paris was the first point to be examined. The mass of well-disposed people of all classes—that is to say, the immense majority—eagerly desired an act that would free them. But, after all, this is but a silent mass; no manifestation ever reveals its sympathies. The various parties, on the contrary, are demonstrative. At that time they had taken deep root; the republican party especially numbered many adherents among the working classes. It was not in Paris that Louis Napoleon's strength lay: therefore, resistance had certainly to be looked forward to; because at the moment when the various parties would see the Prince at work they would combine to bar his progress. Therefore we had to consider and prepare for the struggle. It was at this particular point that the preventive measures to be resolved upon had to be carefully examined; it was the final settlement of the plan for what we must call the *Coup d'État*. I also brought my suggestions to the problem.

Like the Minister for War, I had found traces of the past. The plan, or rather the plans, prepared by M. Carlier, my predecessor, in view of a possible *Coup d'État* in which he was to co-operate in the middle of September, had been handed to me at the Prefecture of Police.

Let us first say a few words about a document which M. Carlier had submitted to the Prince. It was not the plan of a *Coup d'État* ; it was rather a plan of general direction—a programme, as M. Carlier termed it himself. Its purpose was to find the solution of the crisis by lawful means. It is well to communicate this programme first, before we examine the plans of the *Coup d'État* properly speaking. We transcribe textually.

“Programme handed to M. le Président the 9th September, 1851, by M. Carlier, Prefect of Police :—

“Considering the condition of public affairs, and in order to save social order, which is being imperilled, we must raise the Government standard above all personal and dynastic considerations.

“Only a standard placed on such an elevation can give those who shall defend it the proper conviction, and consequently the strength, courage, and talents necessary to foil the intrigues of the various parties.

“Who would dare, without being hooted, unfurl the flag of a pretender in presence of the flag of France in jeopardy.

“France will belong to him who will drag her out of the painful situation to which she was abandoned in 1848. This great triumph should be the sole preoccupation of the President. If he succeeds, all will be well: neither pretenders, nor the intrigues of coteries, nor hostile parties in the Assembly, will have the least influence in presence of the general impulse.

“To attain this result, the following means should be employed:

“1. To arouse France, who is asleep, by a statement of the perils that threaten her.

“2. To reconstruct the National Guard, in view of the approaching perils, and proclaim the motive openly.

“3. To form a Ministry with a programme and an aim.

“4. At the opening of the Assembly—

“Manifesto of the President;

“Petition for a law on the permission to reside in Paris;*

* This law was in fact passed in 1851, for foreigners as well as natives. It is now abrogated and only applies to ticket-of-leave men and others, under the surveillance of the police.—*Trans.*

“Petition for the proclamation of the state of siege during the elections.

“These measures will have the effect of altering people’s ideas ; they will embarrass intriguers, and foil their schemes.

“If these plans be adopted, all the honour of them will belong to the President. The country will not be mistaken ; by the natural logic of things, she will carry her affection and her vote to the able and determined Chief of the State who will have brought the country out of a crisis more difficult than any which France has ever experienced.

“If, on the contrary, the Assembly refuses to grant the President the means to save the country, beset with fear, this Assembly will no longer be reckoned among the powers of the State. I do not mention the contingency of a probable insurrection if those measures were adopted ; because it may be taken for granted that the Government will not be caught unawares. The National Guard, the army, and all the living forces of France, will uprise with enthusiasm to defend it, and to make an end of demagoguery.”

M. Carlier had always manifested sufficiently strong dislikes to pledge his responsibility in the furtherance of a *Coup d'État*. Would the programme we have just read have removed this

difficulty? Would its application have led to a satisfactory result? Would it, as he said, save "the social order which is being imperilled"?

One might, on the contrary, affirm that it would have gravely compromised it.

The least that can be said of this programme is that its exposition was nebulous and emphatic, and that it in no way looked at the real aspect of the question. Was it not rather a mere subterfuge to escape the responsibility of a *Coup d'État*?

"To arouse France, who is asleep." But France was everywhere very wide awake indeed, and particularly aware of the perils that threatened her.

"To reconstruct the National Guard." It would have been simply reorganizing resistance and disciplining the revolt.

"To proclaim the motive openly." It was tantamount to throwing the peaceable part of the Paris population into the profoundest state of alarm.

"To form a Ministry with a programme and an aim." Which aim? and where would be found the means to attain it? If lawful means became insufficient to vanquish the obstacles, to what measures would one have to resort to attain the aim? Might one go as far as the *Coup d'État* if deliverance could be got in no other way? But

this feasible part of the programme, could it be entrusted to a Ministry in its entirety? So important a secret, given up to ten individuals at once, would it be strictly kept?

"To proclaim the state of siege during the elections." The merits of this measure were undeniable; its advantages were dependent upon a number of incidents that could not be appreciated prospectively.

"The law on the permission to reside in Paris." There was nothing to say against it; but a similar question had only a distant connection with the decisions of a much higher order that claimed the present attention.

But "to reconstruct the National Guard"? This part of the programme was so far removed from the necessities of the hour, that one felt tempted to ask for whose benefit M. Carlier meant to act. What, in fact, is the spirit of this modern institution—what is its most logical end in view? What aid can be expected, or rather what perils may not be apprehended, from it?

The National Guard is the population armed: almost ever useless for the purpose of repression, most often detrimental to the supreme power. It is an army which argues on the fitness of taking up arms, which discusses the conditions of its engage-

ments, which bargains with its co-operation, which in the heat of action itself criticises instead of obeying, places considerations of prudence above courage. Is it not an embarrassing cohort rather than an army? Nay, more, it is a constant peril even more than an embarrassment—a peril in itself, a peril in the way of example; a peril in itself, because one can never make sure that the weapons of those citizen soldiers may not be turned against their commanders; a peril in the way of example, because such a militia may at any moment communicate to the real army its hesitations, its fears, and cause the latter to forget its duty, to betray its trust.

The National Guard of 1830 and 1848 afforded this sad spectacle. Instead of supporting the throne, it joined the rioters; in fact, it took the lead in the movement, and by so doing ensured the triumph of the Revolution. The National Guard at the moment of political crises is nothing else but universal suffrage provided with the means of rendering itself justice; it is the voting-paper replaced by a bayonet and a cannon. We may go farther still, and say that even in those days when the sympathies of the National Guard would prompt it to sincerely defend the supreme power, its co-operation would prove useless. The war of the streets requires, more

than any other, exceptional staying powers and consummate experience of the rules of warfare. One must not expect to find those qualities in a shop-keeper, a merchant, or a workman, dubbed soldier for the nonce. Neither must we expect the father of a family to expose to the chances of war an existence which first of all belongs to his kindred. This painful trial of a civil war—it is the regular army that must bear it; because it does so valiantly each time that its chiefs know how to direct it, when it needs no other aid to conquer.

Therefore, to reconstruct the National Guard would have been to deprive ourselves gratuitously of the unfettered direction of a possible military movement, and to abandon its fate, as well as that of the country, to the whims of a population inconstant in her preferences as well as her decisions.

The Prince had judged the programme of M. Carlier, as it deserved to be judged, as an impossible dream. He had requested him to study more carefully and directly the necessities by which they were confronted, and to submit to him, not a prospective programme, but a plan of immediate action—a plan for a *Coup d'État*. The very next day M. Carlier had brought the new plan demanded of him.

This plan was conceived in view of two different

contingencies. It dealt with a possible *Coup d'État* during the vacation, and consequently in the absence of the Assembly; it dealt also with the possible action whilst the Assembly was sitting. The methods did not differ materially on either hypothesis. The plan was exceedingly simple.

In case of action during the vacation, a decree of the President of the Republic pronouncing the dissolution of the Assembly was to be posted up on a certain day throughout the whole of France—it was to be posted in open daylight. In Paris, the army, under marching orders, should occupy its posts of observation and act in case of uprising. The great mistake of this combination was to see no danger elsewhere than in the capital; and this exclusive preoccupation overlooked other perils more difficult to overcome—in fact, the most serious that might arise.

Would not the members of the Assembly, scattered all over the provinces, have grouped themselves on several points, attempted some organisation and made an appeal to the military forces? They would have had with them the generals-deputies; they would have succeeded in constituting centres of government possessing all the necessary elements to enforce obedience. This would have been nothing less than civil war. It

required a strong dose of optimism to fail to see the evidence of this ; nevertheless the dose was there.

But most eyes were opened at last ; and the 17th September, the very day fixed for its execution, this rash enterprise was abandoned. It was General de Saint-Arnaud who was the chief cause of the miscarriage of this first plan in which he was to play the principal part. He saw the peril of it, and firmly declared that, while willing to co-operate in any act carefully and prudently conceived, he refused to engage in so foolhardy an attempt. What service did not he render both to the country and to the Prince by acting as he did ! According to the second combination of M. Carlier's plan, the attempt was to be made immediately after the re-opening of the Assembly ; everything was to be arranged as in the former case. The proclamations and decretals of the President of the Republic were to be posted on the walls of Paris before the hour of meeting of the Chamber ; the soldiery was to be on foot and the police on the watch.

In both cases, however, some preventive measures had been suggested by M. Carlier. Two hours before the posting up of the placards, he was to arrest the chiefs of the secret societies and the leaders of the demagogues : he was perfectly familiar with the whole of the gang, and the list of them

which he left behind proved of real service on the 2nd December. No doubt M. Carlier foresaw resistance; he deemed an appeal to arms very possible if the acclamations of the first few hours did not discourage the adversaries of the Prince; but he considered this very resistance as a favourable circumstance rather than as a cause for anxiety. Repression would be more energetic; the rebellion would be crushed; and, while relinquishing the glory of a victory won through enthusiasm, one would have the consolation of a success gained by force. This last plan was as much the Prince's as M. Carlier's, who in his drafting of it had acted upon the principal instructions from the Chief of the State.

As has doubtlessly been perceived by now, the starting point of this plan was confidence in the Paris population, confidence in the army, confidence in the popularity of Louis Napoleon, and at the same time a conviction of the want of popularity of the Assembly, and of the impotency of the generals-deputies to exercise the slightest influence on the troops. Such an appreciation of the situation contained many and serious errors. What cruel disappointments, what terrible catastrophes, would have been the result, if such chimerical illusions had been taken as the basis for action! General

de Saint-Arnaud and I were of the same opinion in that respect; and on no consideration should we have consented to engage our responsibilities in such an adventure.

As for me, I counted neither upon the disposition of the Paris population (or rather of its restless population), because I took their hostility for granted, nor upon Louis Napoleon's popularity in the capital, which, I believed to be very limited, nor on the want of popularity of the Assembly, whose persecution would gain adherents to it; nor on the impotency of the generals-deputies who might be able to gain over some regiments.

The Prince clung to his first convictions. He had a blind faith in the power which the name of Napoleon exercised on the people; he was conscious of wishing nought but the country's welfare; and he was inclined to think that the masses, appreciating the sincerity of his intention, would applaud his enterprise. He felt, as it were, a kind of vanity in owing his success to his popularity only.

In this kind of conjunctures probabilities should only be accepted as problematical odd money. Prudence enjoins one, on the contrary, to carefully examine the critical turns events may take. It is well, no doubt, to have faith in our success: it is a

condition of strength. But a positive mind is bound to place side by side with this confidence the prescience of unavoidable difficulties, of temporary reverses, of mistakes inseparable from all human enterprise. Amidst all the illusions with which the Prince had been lulled to sleep, and which he had shared, I saw but one element of reality, and even that a conditional one—a steadfast army. The approval of the majority of well-disposed people was no doubt to be hoped for; but (we have said it already) this altogether platonic approbation amounted, after all, to nothing more than a moral force.

To prevent, within the measure of the possible, all attempt at resistance, at insurrection—or at least to circumscribe its influence and the perils to which it might lead—such was my intention; and everything in my plan tended towards that end.

The question of the arrest of the generals-deputies, as a matter of precaution, had been discussed in September at St. Cloud with M. Carlier, when it had been decided in the negative. Surely he could not have remembered the eminence of their services to make so light of the influence they might wield over the army in a moment of surprise. Several of the regiments of the Paris garrison had been under their command; the coincidence should not

be overlooked. If only one regiment had accepted their direction, and turned its arms against the Prince, what dire complications might not have been the result? Where would this scission in the army have stopped? Would not the struggle have assumed the most horrible character? It would no longer have been the war of the streets, the struggle of an army against the rioters, it would have been civil war in its most sombre aspect, in its most terrible conditions—army against army: that is to say, on both sides bravery, courage, the organisation and science of warfare. In such a war there is no counting the dead. It was this immense loss of life that had to be averted from the country at any cost. The most easy precautions, the most elementary and lawful measures, could paralyze resistance and leave the army to its duty, its orders, and its chiefs. However harsh this extremity might be, the generals-deputies must be prevented from acting; and to obtain this result there was but one alternative—to secure their persons for the time being. The interest of the country, nay, their own interests, made this alternative a necessity. In this way the temptation to incite the army to forget its foremost duty, obedience to its hierarchical chiefs, would be spared to them; their inaction was explained by the sole excuse they could accept

—the disposal of their liberty. We may be allowed to say, however, that the arrest of the generals was a right and an absolutely lawful act. They were all in verbal and active communion with General Changarnier. The plot of which he was the soul had them for principal auxiliaries; and as such they incurred the penalties of the law.

It is necessary to add that no other thought than that of averting the peril had inspired those measures. When engaging in so tremendous an enterprise one is inspired by the conviction of duty; and the first obligation that forces itself upon the conscience is to neglect nothing that can ensure success. Hence, those who had contributed most to make the crisis of the 2nd December inevitable were to be the first victims of its rigour. But they had to blame themselves rather than us. If the love of country had dominated their party spirit, they would have lent a more attentive ear to the anxious clamour of the nation; they would have recognised that the Prince alone possessed her confidence; they would have striven to make his re-election lawfully possible; and through them the Constitution would have sanctioned that which could now only be obtained by force.

The recollection of the past had not been without its influence on our decisions in the measures thus

resolved upon. The situation forced upon the Prince in 1851 by the violent hostility of the Assembly recalled in more respects than one the situation forced in 1830 and 1848 upon the Governments of the time by the virulent attacks of the Chamber of Deputies. If in 1830 the Monarchy, which was informed of everything that was being plotted against it, had had less consideration for its enemies—if it had proceeded by energetic preventive measures, if on the eve of action it had laid its hands on the chief movers in the conspiracy—deputies of the Left, journalists, and leaders of secret societies—it would undoubtedly have paralyzed the recourse to arms, averted the Revolution, and thus have rendered an immense service to the country.

The same if, in 1848, the Government of King Louis Philippe had listened to the repeated and urgent warnings of the Prefect of Police, the honourable M. Delessert—who warned them that the Revolution was imminent, who disclosed its doings, pointed out its chiefs—if the then Government had arrested the leaders of the Extreme Left, the heads of those self-same secret societies, some of the most turbulent among the National Guards, the revolt, frustrated, assailed in its very organization, would not have dared lift its head on the 24th February. France would have this time also

escaped the horrors of the Revolution, and King Louis Philippe would have kept his crown.

It was but natural that these lessons should not be lost upon us. In presence of analogous perils, our attitude was bound to differ essentially from that taken by the Governments of 1830 and 1848. Instead of remaining in a condition of dangerous procrastination, we went straight to the enemy, and by energetic measures shattered his strength and disabled his attempts beforehand.

The Prince, in spite of his dislike to accept the method of preventive measures, had ended by accepting our plans, and an understanding had been come to with regard to the arrest of the generals, as well as with regard to several other decisions dictated by prudent foresight.

Our first conferences had, therefore, disposed of the most important questions; in our subsequent discussions the various other details of the plan I had suggested were successively adopted. They may be summed up here :—

From three to four in the morning, successive reception in my private room of the commissaries of police to give them their instructions.

From five to half-past five departure of said commissaries, accompanied by the whole of the *personnel* required for their support.

At half-past five, occupation of the palace of the Assembly by a regiment to be selected by the Minister for War.

At six, arrest of the generals-deputies, and other representatives considered as the most dangerous.

Equally at six, arrest of the chiefs of the secret societies, and such democrats as were known for the violence of their opinions.

At ten minutes past six, occupation by the pickets of the Republican Guard of the posts indicated, in the immediate neighbourhood of the houses where arrests were being made.

At half-past six, delivery at the Prefecture of Police by Colonel de Bévillé and the director of the national printing works of the proclamations, and various other placards.

At half-past six, simultaneous occupation by the troops of the strategical positions.

At a quarter to seven, posting of the following placards:

1. Decree of the President of the Republic dissolving the Assembly.

2. Proclamation of Louis Napoleon to the French nation, entitled "Appeal to the People."

3. Proclamation of the President of the Republic to the army.

4. Proclamation of the Prefect of Police to the inhabitants of Paris.

By seven o'clock everything was to be finished. Nothing more would have to be done but to await the reports of the commissaries of police, superintendents, and agents posted at the most important points of observation of the capital.

At eight o'clock the Minister of the Interior was to send to all the prefects the decree of dissolution, the proclamations, and a summary of what had already transpired. Thus everything was foreseen, arranged hour by hour, minute by minute; and each of us could, by taking note of the resolutions decided upon, follow the march of events step by step the moment it became necessary.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MINISTRY OF THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

Discussion of the Bases of the future Constitution.—The principles of Louis Napoleon.—The preferences of General de Saint-Arnaud and mine.—Necessity of a temporary Dictatorship.—The question of the Ministry of the *Coup d'État*.—The Prince's resistance.—The part he wished M. de Persigny to play.—The efforts of M. de Morny to get the Ministry of the Interior.—Our conference at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.—The presentiments of the ex-King of Westphalia.—The Mission he confides to me to the Chief of the State.

It was not sufficient to arrange everything for the period of action: we had to consider what should be done with the country after the success, a success of which no one doubted. General de Saint-Arnaud and myself were ready enough to admit that the first thing to do was to drag the country from this state of anarchy. But in favour of which form of government was this movement to be accomplished? We were entitled to concern ourselves with this—to interrogate the Prince, and to discuss this foremost question.

The form of government itself had not to be discussed, the Prince having declared from the beginning that he meant to propose the continuance of

the Republic to the nation. But what would be the constitutional régime of this new Republic? That was the problem that might divide the most intelligent and law-abiding of the nation.

The Constitution of the Year VIII.* appealed strongly to Louis Napoleon's predilections. He looked upon some of its provisions as a prudent equilibrium between the principles of authority and liberty. By imparting to it such modifications as were required by altered times and circumstances, he considered it suitable to the principal necessities of the crisis through which France was passing. Its general plan was good: it offended the convictions of none of us; on the contrary, it might afford us a possible satisfaction. We had neither the leisure nor the necessary competence to frame by ourselves the constitutional pact; it would have been anticipating the future. The task would be reserved to a special commission of the most eminent jurists, perhaps to the Assemblies themselves. In this first interchange of our impressions it was easy enough to distinguish our respective tendencies.

The Prince, while wishing to establish the prin-

* Supposed to be the work of Sieyès, and drawn up after the *Coup d'État* of the 18th Brumaire. Promulgated 24th Frimaire, in the eighth year of the First Republic (Republican Calendar), corresponding to the Gregorian date of 15th December, 1799.—*Trans.*

ciple of authority most solidly on the very summit, inclined to broad concessions to the principles of democracy. In spite of the difficulty of dovetailing the two, this was the aim pursued by Louis Napoleon; his writings bore witness to this idea, and he was anxious to put it into practice. He showed himself then what he has always shown himself—a dictatorial democrat. He more than once had occasion to perceive the danger of some of his ideas.

It was not difficult to tell General de Saint-Arnaud's principal bias. He felt the influence which the habit of military command exercises on the mind. He was neither democrat nor parliamentarian; he was a pure and simple autocrat; he wanted a régime of absolute power, without having much considered the conditions in which it had to be exercised.

Neither were the representative doctrines much in favour then among the Conservatives. Their abuse by the Assembly had caused them to be looked upon with serious prejudice. The particularly transient situation through which we were passing, and the agitation that survived the revolutionary crisis, were not sufficiently considered. Therefore it was only in the most guarded terms that I could offer some suggestions—not in favour of the Parliamentary régime proper (I took care to

make some reservations with regard to it), but in favour of a régime of serious control, the form of which would be examined eventually. I did not point out the degree in which an elective representation of the nation ought to participate in the governmental mechanism; I merely indicated in a general way that side by side with the supreme power the real control by the Assemblies should find its place. The Prince by no means rejected this starting-point. Let us note, by the way, that the efficiency of a similar régime must depend on the use made of it. Besides, the Prince declared that, whatsoever the Constitution to be given to the nation, it should not be final, but be left open to improvement. In that way every reservation for the future was made.

As for the present, hesitation was out of the question. After the disturbances of all kinds to which our unhappy country had been a prey, in presence of the agitations and divisions that still prevailed, a dictatorship was a necessity for the time being. We all three partook of this conviction.

In fact, when great social and political disorders have occurred in a country, they fatally leave a long groundswell behind. There are no victors without vanquished; resignation is by no means the first feeling after defeat; the thirst for revenge

occupies the foremost place. Only time and repose can bring a spirit of sacrifice. To accelerate its return, the last germ of the struggle should be carefully removed, the least discussion carefully avoided, the smallest hostile publication strenuously prevented, all tendency to retaliation vigorously guarded against. In one word, some one must assume the mastership, in such a way as to dominate the situation and to make the nation aware of it. It is by a dictatorship that this result is obtained. The more troublous the times, the more this exception is justified. Only wisdom and moderation in the application of authority will make a similar power acceptable without complaint. The violent perturbations in the lives of peoples have at all times brought the dictatorship in their wake. According to the times and the peoples, it became omnipotent or limited in its rights. Its names have varied; but its origin and its effects have never ceased to be the same. In our days the mildest incarnation of the dictatorship has been, and still is called the state of siege—which, truly speaking, admits only of a limited and previously resolved application of this exceptional régime.

Amongst the Romans the dictatorship was not, as in modern times, a fortuitous act, a recuperative incident rendered necessary in consequence of

violent revolutionary shocks, in order to afford the country the opportunity of recovering her composure and reason, previous to entering upon a new and regular period; among the Romans the dictatorship attained the dignity of an institution. It was, in presence of the perilous complications at home and abroad, the legal resource wherewith to save the country, or at least to guard her against formidable trials. The dictatorship has been most often a source of benefits to the Romans, hence they frequently recurred to it; they professed a deep veneration for the dictator, and submitted without reserve and without murmur to his authority.*

In our days also the dictatorship was fruitful in benefits; that of Napoleon I. and that of Napoleon III., of which we shall have to speak later on, will leave the recollection of great services rendered, because they delivered the country from anarchy and gave to France a regular Government.†

* The Roman dictatorship assumed various forms. It was most often what it is in our days, the concentration into one hand of all the powers of the State. Sometimes it assumed a more extended form. It was thus that the powers conferred upon Augustus allowed him to substitute the imperial régime for the republican constitution, rendered ineffectual by anarchy.

† The only dictatorships of this century were those of Napoleon I. and of Napoleon III. The temporary usurpations of the power, which in 1848 and 1870 sprang from riots, cannot be dignified by the name of dictatorship.

The Prince, enamoured as he was of authority, only contemplated assuming the dictatorship for a limited period. He did not make light of the responsibility it entails, and he would gladly accept the establishing of a constitutional régime based upon the will of the nation. Hence the dissensions between us on those essential questions, on the régime which to give or rather to propose to France, were only prospective; for the present there was a thorough understanding.

On another point of minor importance, but which, nevertheless, offered a lively interest, an understanding had not been so easily arrived at. In fact, there still remained in our preliminary arrangements a lamentable gap. There was, for the day of the *Coup d'État*, neither a Ministry decided upon, nor a Ministry in contemplation. I had not ceased to insist strenuously upon the ministerial question being provided for, as much as possible, before the turn of events; it would have been an error to gratuitously deprive ourselves of at least the semblance of a constituted power, and to deny the country the time-honoured satisfaction of seeing the new government present itself with its Ministry, with a Cabinet in due form.

In France the word Cabinet had for a long time, and by itself, signified Government, because in

public opinion the Cabinet was in fact its most living formula, and this impression was the natural heritage of the parliamentary period. In those days when some grave crisis came to trouble the country, the formation of a new Cabinet was considered the remedy for the evil, the concession which was to lay the storm. It is through having opportunely changed his Ministry on the 12th May that Louis Philippe escaped in 1832 the fate in store for him in 1848. It is through having delayed the change of Ministry on the 22nd February, it is through having withheld too long the firing of this constitutional battery, that his dynasty fell. In fact, let us remember that public opinion only demanded on the first day of the revolution of 1848 the dismissal of a Ministry that had become unpopular notwithstanding its signal merits. But the refusal of this satisfaction incensed the masses, they became accessible to every influence, refused to listen to any compromise, and overthrew the throne, as it were, to punish the King for not having sent away his ministers.

We were not sufficiently distant from this period of ministerial prestige to neglect the additional benefit of this force, and if we could not hope for much from the prestige of individuals we might at least count upon the prestige of the institution.

On this point the Prince eluded my persistent inquiries by evasive answers. But the little I was enabled to gather from his views in that respect made me suppose that we were swayed by the same impressions. Only the difficulties connected with individuals obstructed his plans.

There were no doubt many embarrassing obstacles to the formation of a Cabinet willing, as a whole, to accept beforehand, and under conditions comparatively undecided, its part of the responsibility of a *Coup d'État*. One had, first of all, to find ten devoted and determined men, mutually suited, inspired by the reciprocal confidence which, if useful under ordinary circumstances, becomes indispensable in grave conjunctures. To inform them beforehand of the event which was to inaugurate their accession to office was to jeopardize one of the chief elements of the success of the enterprise; namely, secrecy. To withhold this confidence, to reserve to them the surprise of their exalted mission, was to expose one's self to faltering, which, supervening in the first hours of events, might lead to disastrous complications.

Let us say here, in order to precisely indicate the part allotted to each by the Prince in his confidential communications relative to his plans for the *Coup d'État*, that if he felt unwilling to divulge

his designs to the political men who generally enjoyed his confidence, he continued, nevertheless, to discuss his projects and their execution with his two trusted familiars, Colonel Fleury and M. de Persigny. But those two auxiliaries were so identified with the Prince himself that it might safely be said that they formed but one and the self-same individual. In disclosing his most secret thoughts to them Louis Napoleon could still say to himself that his secret remained his and his only.

There was, however, one indirect way, if not to constitute a Cabinet, which as yet would have been premature, to at least secure, in an almost certain manner, the co-operation of men whose word could be relied upon. One must return in imagination to this period, to gain an idea of the nature of such negotiations. If the Prince, who blamed himself for having been too trusting during the period of preparation for the *Coup d'État* of the 17th September, remained silent this time on the reality of his projects, on his plan, on the date of a possible action, he allowed certain privileged persons to expatiate before him on the necessity of a *Coup d'État*. Without admitting anything that might compromise him, he often went as far as to question. This was notably the case with MM. de Morny and Rouher, who on the 17th September had been

the confidants of his plans, as well as with MM. Abbattucci, de Turgot, de Casabianca, Fourtoul, Bineau, Ducos, Baron van Heeckeren and a few others. Each of them might say well enough, "I have spoken to the President of the necessity of a *Coup d'État*." None of them had the right to say, "The President contemplates a *Coup d'État*, he has told me of his plans." And in justice be it said no one indulged such talk. Might not the Prince at a given day reply to the recommendations to act, to the offers of service which he could easily provoke without divulging anything himself, by a simple interrogation or else by an eventual challenge to make good their professions. He knew the limited number of men from which he might choose sufficiently well to invest each reply with the value they liked to put upon it. Undoubtedly if he could not constitute a Cabinet in this way, as he might have done in ordinary times, he could at least secure the co-operation of a sufficient number to form a Cabinet on the day of action. If nothing more could be done, it was at least as well to have the assurance and confidence of being able to form instantaneously at a given moment an almost complete Ministry.

The President had so often been abandoned by those upon whom he thought he could rely, that his

dislike to fresh overtures was perfectly natural; but we repeat, he might in this instance remain content with indirect steps. Nevertheless he had made some attempts, and if not hindered by ties of various natures, he would have found his men. MM. Marquis de Turgot, Count de Casabianca, de Saint-Arnaud, and Fourtoul, members of the Cabinet that would expire the 2nd December, were ready to follow him in any enterprise. M. Bineau loudly demanded the *Coup d'État*, he offered his co-operation unconditionally; M. de Morny, who for a long time had indicated himself as Minister of the Interior, and M. de Persigny, could have made up the Cabinet.

M. de Morny, in the interviews which he forced upon the Prince, more often than the latter could have wished, showed himself the indefatigable intermediary of a Fould, Rouher, and Magne combination; he strenuously opposed the admission to the new Ministry of M. Bineau and of the Members of the still-existing Cabinet, and it was by persuading the Prince that it was better to wait a day longer, in order to have accredited Ministers like MM. Fould, Magne, and Rouher, that M. de Morny succeeded in hindering the formation of a Ministry.

The adjournment tallied, moreover, with one of

the fixed decisions of the President—he wished M. de Persigny to be one of the Members of the Ministry of the *Coup d'État*; he was aware of all the resistance the name would encounter from MM. Fould and de Morny, and he expected to impose the name more easily after than on the eve of the struggle. Consequently it was agreed that the formation of the Cabinet would be adjourned until the morning of the 2nd December.

The choice of the Minister of the Interior had preoccupied the President for a long while already. M. de Morny bestirred himself very actively to obtain this post, but the President felt evidently disinclined to entrust him with it. His sentiments towards M. de Morny were strangely mixed. At times apparently intimate, at others markedly distant, but even in the best days of their intercourse, extreme mistrust on the part of the Prince.

M. de Morny became more tenacious in proportion to his growing belief in some hesitation on the part of the Prince. He wanted to become Minister at all costs. Perhaps he could have done so in the time of the Assembly; but he was conscious of the inferiority he would have shown in the tribune. His qualities were not of the order required first and foremost in a Parliamentary Government. He lacked the oratorical gifts, and confronted, as

Minister, by an Assembly, he would have exposed himself to an inevitable check. His own tact had prompted him to reserve himself for a Ministry of silence and of action, in which events would have caused his chief merit, courage, to stand out. It was, therefore, a capital point of his ambition to obtain the portfolio of the Interior on the 2nd December. He was uneasy at the reticence the Prince showed towards him each time that he urged the latter to have done with the Assembly. He was too watchful of everything that occurred not to foresee events. The Prince did not absolutely deny to him that he had made up his mind to a *Coup d'État*, but he was particularly anxious that this time, and until the eleventh hour, its plan and the day should be kept from M. de Morny, whose habit of speculating and gambling on the stock exchange, made the Prince afraid that the secrets of the State would find their way to quarters where it was important that they should not be compromised.

Being in company one evening with M. de Morny at the Marquis de Turgot's, I was enabled to appreciate his anxiety and to fathom his ignorance of the plans of the *Coup d'État* in spite of his affectation of being kept informed of everything. "My fear," he said to me, "is lest the extreme confidence

of the President prove his loss ; he wishes to make his popularity the starting-point of his success. But in Paris he must not rely upon enthusiasm ; what he wants is bayonets and a goodly number of arrests." To him who watched things closely, this doctrine was but very elementary. M. de Morny was well aware that such was my opinion, and his language was only meant to make of this community of sentiments the transition to a confidence, which to his great regret failed to come.

M. de Morny was not the only one among the political surroundings of the Prince whose eager wish it was to be initiated to his exact plans. In Louis Napoleon's family itself the excitement became extreme. I can testify to the exceedingly great preoccupations of Prince Jérôme, the ex-King of Westphalia, the last surviving brother of Napoleon I. With his vast experience Prince Jérôme, though at no moment admitted to the confidence of his nephew, felt beyond the possibility of doubt that the day was drawing near for the restoration which was to reward the Bonaparte family for the poignant trials of exile. Several times I had to be on my guard against those intimate conversations in which the relations hoped to betray me into some revelations of our projects. Prince Jérôme, above all, appreciated the situation thoroughly, and saw

with exceeding grief that his co-operation was not invited to events he felt to be very near. But his great affection for his son, Napoleon, made him blind to the faults of this young prince; he had too eagerly espoused the latter's resentments, and a rupture with the President had been the result; hence he was absolutely kept out of the affairs of the State.

Grave circumstances often favour the adjustment of family differences. I was enabled to prove it on this occasion. The 28th November, Prince Jérôme sent word whether I could come to him; a serious indisposition obliged him to keep to his apartment, and he wished to speak to me on some important subjects. A few hours afterwards I was by the bedside of the august sufferer. I immediately perceived that he had selected me to be the intermediary of a reconciliation with his nephew. I listened to the recital of his grievances; I was obliged to go through the whole of the correspondence between himself and the President with him, the terms of which fully explained the rupture. "This situation," said Prince Jérôme to me, "must not be prolonged in presence of the events that are being prepared. I do not ask you for your secrets, you would be right in refusing to give them, but before eight days are over, my nephew will have

made his *Coup d'État*; circumstances compel him to it, and his courage will happily inspire him. I have served the Empire to its last hour; I wish the first day of the new reign of our dynasty to find me, as its first soldier, at the post of danger. The day of the *Coup d'État* the Prince will present himself to the people, the brother of the Emperor must be by his side. Your situation points you out as possessing all his confidence. I pray you go and see my nephew; he has an excellent heart, I know him well; tell him all that has passed between us. You will easily find out under what conditions our good understanding may be restored. As for me, I give you unconditional power. I will overlook my age and my antecedents to consider nothing but the happiness of seeing peace restored to our family. Let me be certain of a friendly reception at the Elysée, and though I have not forgotten that if I no longer visit my nephew it is because he expressed his wish to this effect, I will make the first advance—I give you leave to tell him so.”

A few minutes after this interview I communicated its particulars to the Prince-President, and from his first words I gathered that his affection for his uncle would make my task very easy. It was soon arranged that the Prince on the morning of the *Coup d'État* would write to Prince Jérôme to meet

him on horseback at a certain hour at the Elysée. This letter would, even more than the old King of Westphalia expected—one lives on memories when the reality is gone—spare his susceptibilities with regard to his age and antecedents, which he was never weary of putting forward.

In fact, on the morning of the 2nd December we shall see King Jérôme on horseback by the side of the Prince, his nephew. As King Jérôme had so justly foreseen, the day of solution was near. The time for the meeting of the Assembly had arrived. Our conferences were suspended for some days. All the questions of chief importance had been decided, only that of the subsequent Ministry remained in abeyance. General de Saint-Arnaud and I had only personal interviews with the Chief of the State. Our attention was taken up with what was being done in preparation for the first sittings of the Assembly; in fact, we shall see the formidable questions that were to be discussed by it, and the violent emotions into which the country was thrown by its debates.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BILL OF THE QUAESTORS.*

The Government proposes the repeal of the law of the 31st May.—Debates on the throwing out of the bill.—The bill called “the Quaestors’;” its drift and its import.—The origin of the question.—General Changarnier’s police.—A word about the secret police.—Our plans in the event of the Quaestors’ Bill being voted.—M. Vitet’s report.—The sitting of the 17th November.—General Bedeau’s interpellation.—Our meeting at the Tuileries.—Throwing out of the “Quaestors’ Bill.”—To what contradictions Generals Cavaignac and Changarnier were reduced.—The attitude which circumstances imposed upon the Monarchical parties.

FAR from having found in the few weeks’ rest it had taken and in the contact with the populations of the departments the appeasement of its ardour,

* The quaestors, to the number of three under a republican régime, are charged with the stewardship and monetary concerns of the Chamber of Deputies. Now and then their jurisdiction is productive of very comic incidents, as when Quaestor Baze, a few years ago, put a stop to the drinking of high-priced wine and luxurious dining of the deputies at the expense of the nation. Members pay five francs a month for their refreshments, and are entitled for that amount to eat and drink as much as they please in the way of cakes, sandwiches, and light beverages. But sumptuous dining, except at their own expense, is a thing of the past. Those who like anything more substantial than cakes, or something stronger than syrups, tea, and ordinary claret must sacrifice some of their pay, which is 700 francs a month for deputies.—*Trans.*

the Assembly came back animated by a most bitter spirit. A prey to feverish excitement, it scarcely cared to hide its seditious projects. It felt incensed at seeing public opinion so manifestly favourable to Louis Napoleon and so hostile to the Assembly. Nothing but the most violent resolutions and even rash enterprises perhaps could be expected.

The Message of the Chief of the State roused the irritation of some of the members of the majority to a boiling point. The Prince gave notice of a bill to repeal the law of the 31st May, and he made his Message the true exposition of his motives for the bill. To that part of the majority which cherished the hope to make the Mountain the instrument for resisting the Prince, this proved a fatal obstacle; because the division between the Lefts and the Rights being inevitable on this question, it would be more difficult to restore union in the nick of time, the more that action was contemplated within brief delay. Immediately after the reading of the Message, the bill for repealing the law of the 31st May was lodged by the Government. The 7th November, its discussion was begun in the *Bourcaux*. The 11th the reporter, Count Daru, presented his report, and on the 13th the debates were opened.

“What is the situation of France at the moment

of the opening of the great debate," said Count Daru in his report, which concluded in favour of the maintenance of the law of the 31st May.

"The public powers approach the term of their mission; their authority becomes weaker on account of it. The anarchical parties grow bolder in proportion; their doings are pointed out to you by the Message, which shows them disciplined, organized, spread over the whole of France and ready to take advantage of our errors and our divisions. The most criminal plans, and the contemplated date of their execution, are, moreover, no longer a secret from anybody.

"While factions contend, the mass of the nation remains tranquil but uneasy. Weary of revolutions, she asks of the powers that represent her peace and security. This, in fact, is her first and foremost need. She desires a pacific and lawful solution of the difficulties by which the country is beset, and in her just apprehension of bloody conflicts she not only shows herself severe beforehand, but ready to turn against those who would assume the responsibility of giving the signal for the struggle, and thus call down upon France the rout of calamities which civil war never fails to bring in its wake."

Did not M. Daru in this last phrase involuntarily

condemn the party of agitation in the Chamber? Did not the severity of his language aim straight at the quaestors, whose bill, pregnant with insults, and of which we shall have to speak shortly, was at this moment being discussed by the bureaux.* And by saying that the nation desired "a pacific and lawful solution," did not he again severely criticize, without wishing it, the recent vote of the Assembly which had rejected the bill for the revision of the Constitution, the only combination that allowed of this pacific and lawful solution, which he said he wished with all his heart?

Count Daru added: "What is the best thing to do in this situation? Is society to divest itself of the most lawful weapons it holds, at the risk of discouraging, by so doing, its staunchest defenders? When the various parties stand ready for action, when they avow their aggressive intentions, when unmistakable symptoms, manifest signs, reveal the imminence of this aggression, and the permanent danger which the crisis of 1852 may cause to burst out—is this, indeed, the moment to deprive the cause of order of its most precious guarantee, the law of the 31st May!"

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* The bureaux are standing committees which again select the members of the commissions charged to report upon bills presented to the French parliament.—*Trans.*

If M. Daru foresaw the perils of 1852, he measured neither their nature nor their gravity. Was not the law of the 31st May the weakest of ramparts against such menaces. Far from being a safeguard, as it had been at its origin, it on the contrary became, in the new conditions entered upon by the country, a complication, a provocation to civil war. Was it not to be apprehended, in fact, that those three millions of electors who had been disqualified, would on election day come to vindicate, arms in hand, the right that had been taken from them? The Mountain openly incited them to this insurrectionary manifestation; prudence enjoined one to close so favourable a battleground to the Revolutionary army. The law of the 31st May was powerless to avert in the least degree the storms that were gathering on the horizon. The revision of the Constitution would have dissipated them. This chance of a pacific solution having disappeared, it was evident that nothing remained but a solution in which force would assume the chief part on one side or the other.

The debate on the bill offered no salient interest. MM. de la Rochejacquelein, de Vatimesnil, de Thorigny, and Michel de Bourges, were successively heard; but the suit was pleaded before judges whose convictions were settled, whose ver-

dict decided on. In spite of the cordial support of M. Michel de Bourges the Government failed to triumph over the coalition of the monarchical fraction; the bill was thrown out.

In ordinary times a debate on so serious a question would have lasted many days; one sitting had been sufficient to close the discussion. The hurry of the Chamber to settle this question of the law of the 31st May revealed its state of anxiety. It was burning to get at a discussion still more directly at one with the violent emotions to which every one seemed a prey. Even as the opening of the Chamber drew near one might foretell the threatening of the storm.

In fact, on the 6th November, was laid on the tribune the famous project called "the quaestors'," a real implement of war invented to give battle to the Prince-President. The primary thought, the first conception of this bill belonged to General Changarnier. The *enfants terribles* of the Chamber had unconsciously become its ardent promoters, and the majority of the leaders of the Right had rallied round it. This plea, as audacious as provoking, was conceived as follows:—

(Art. 1.) "The President of the National Assembly is entrusted with the security of the Assembly

from within and from without. He exercises in the name of the Assembly the right, conferred upon the legislative power by Article 32 of the Constitution, to determine the strength of the military forces necessary to its safety, to dispose of them and to appoint the chief charged with their command. In pursuance of this provision he has the right to summon the military forces and all other authorities whose co-operation he may deem necessary. Those requisitions may be addressed directly to all the commanding officers, or functionaries, who are bound to obey them immediately, under the penalties provided by the law.

(Art. 2.) "The President may delegate this right of requisition to the quaestors or to one of them.

(Art. 3.) "The present law shall be inserted in the order of the day of the army, and posted up in all the barracks in the territory of the Republic.

(Signed) "BAZE, LE FLÔ, DE PANAT."

A few words are necessary here to acquaint the reader with the precedents of the question revived by the bill of the quaestors.

During the early days of the Constituent Assembly of 1848, the right of the Assembly to provide for its security by itself or through the interme-

diary of its President had been the subject of the most lively preoccupations. A decree of the 11th May, 1848, had regulated the question ; it charged the President of the Assembly with the arrangements for the security of the Assembly from within and without ; it gave him the right to summon the necessary military force and to address his requisitions directly to the general officers or to any functionary. The Assembly had recorded this provision in the 83rd Article of its rules. Article 84 provided that the President could delegate the exercise of his right to the quaestors. This extravagant and perilous privilege of direct requisition had provoked first the opposition of General Cavaignac, notwithstanding his respect for the prerogatives of the Assembly, and afterwards that of General Changarnier himself. Those two military commanders guided by their experience and at that time by their sole preoccupation for the maintenance of discipline in the army, had protested by their acts, against a provision that might compromise the unity of command. The Assembly remained firm to its will, and in consequence of a conflict with General Changarnier had ordered the publication in every barrack of this famous edict of the 11th May.

But Articles 83 and 84 of the Constituent

Assembly had not been reproduced in the new rules of the National Assembly. It was considered expedient that this exorbitant privilege should vanish with the constituent mission of the Assembly, who had created it at a period when all the powers were vested in this Assembly; hence this provision had been knowingly and prudently omitted.

Article 50 of the Constitution provided, in fact, that "*he* (the President of the Republic) *disposed of the military forces*, without the right of ever commanding them personally." Therefore to give an Assembly the right to summon a part of the army without the sanction of the President of the Republic was to impair the right he held in virtue of Article 50. To give, on the other hand, the Chamber the right to determine the number of military forces necessary to its security and to dispose of them, but without specifying that these forces should be summoned in any other than the hierarchical ways, was to remain within the common law, to verily consecrate the omnipotence of the chief of the army, the Minister for War, to conciliate the rights of the respective powers, to respect discipline and to insure unity of command. Such had been the aim of the Constitution when in Article 32 it provided that, "It (the Assembly)

determines the importance of the military forces requisite to its safety and disposes of them." The Constitution had not added the direct right of requisition, previously provided by the decree of the 11th of May, because it attributed an essentially transient value to this provision. The silence of the legislator had an indisputable significance, it was the condemnation, so far as its permanency was concerned, of the decree of the 11th May.

An important fact had confirmed this new doctrine and established the military and constitutional jurisprudence of the right of requisition by the Assembly.

In a conflict that had arisen between General Changarnier and the Chamber on this same subject, the general had ordered the copies of this decree of the 11th May, which had been posted up in the barracks, to be torn down, and in order that no doubt might remain in the minds of the officers, he had asserted the hierarchical right of the chief of the army by warning the former not to comply with any requisition, from no matter whom, unless it came through the intermediary of the Commander-in-Chief. Such was the last aspect of the question. The right provided by Article 30 of the Constitution remained unimpaired; the Chamber was empowered to determine the number of military forces

necessary for its security, but it had to address itself to the Minister for War, who chose according to his own liking the regiments charged with the security of the Assembly, and appointed the commander that suited him. This was the very obstacle at which General Changarnier hurt himself. The present law remaining in force, he could never hope to be invested with the command of the forces of the Assembly, he could not storm the Elysée at the head of a regular army. To group around him a military force whatsoever, he would have been reduced to an odious rôle, to preach insubordination to this very army in which, during an honourable career, he had energetically upheld the principles of discipline. It will be easily understood that he wished to make a supreme effort before committing himself to this painful extremity, because it was to avoid this that he had invented the proposal of the quaestors, that he had succeeded in getting it accepted by a part of the leaders of the majority, and by those who were to give the proposal their name.

We remain, therefore, strictly within the truth, we only repeat what was on every one's lips at the time, what the press proclaimed over and over again, when we affirm that the proposal of the quaestors was nothing else but a declaration of

war to the Elysée, or, to speak correctly, the beginning of action. Not only was the right to dispose of the military forces of France, which the Prince held from the Constitution, encroached upon, but it was attempted to constitute a veritable army without him—an army which would have at its head the chief whom everybody named, General Changarnier, the personal enemy of Louis Napoleon. Once this army organized, the Chamber emerged from the conditions under which the attack on the Prince could only be an insurrection; it became possessed of lawful means, and could under some pretext, not difficult to find, attack the Prince arms in hand. It could dispense at last with this famous signature of President Dupin, for which General Changarnier had waited in vain, and afford the country the terrible spectacle of civil war pursued by lawful means.

And a civil war indeed it would have been, this civil war meditated by the blind enemies of the Prince—a terrible war, in which the army, divided into two camps, would have employed all its courage and science to perpetuate the strife and to multiply the victims.

Such a proposal was not likely to remain a dead letter at the hands of those of the Prince's enemies who had conceived the idea of it. It was very

evident that on the morrow of the carrying of the bill they would have taken the initiative. The most impatient clamoured for action at the very termination of the sitting, lest the Prince should have time to organize his resistance or take the offensive himself.

All these plans were known to us—in fact, they were everybody's secret. We only owed it to our special means of information to have mastered them more thoroughly. It will not be without interest to show which were those means of information and the light they threw for us on the real designs of our enemies.

At all times, the Commander-in-chief of the army of Paris had disposed of a kind of secret police, independent of that of the Prefecture. General Changarnier had his police during the period of his command, he had even extended its organization very skilfully, and when leaving his post had continued his relations with some of his agents, by the aid of whom he was able to keep a certain watch on doings it interested him to know of. Later, and at the time when the most audacious of the majority contemplated even more seriously than they had hitherto done the overthrow of the Prince-President, the general, the true chief of the conspiracy, saw his means of action considerably

increased ; he had organized a real police, whose exclusive mission it was to watch the doings of the Elysée and of the Prefecture of Police.

But in this contest of espionage in which the general engaged against the Government, we had more than one advantage over him.

The staff of what is conventionally called "the secret police" is more limited than is generally supposed ; it is made up almost exclusively of a small number of agents accustomed to this kind of work. Those agents naturally gravitate round the Prefecture of Police. It affords them the best chances of remuneration for their discoveries. If now and then they place their experience at the disposal of either a rival administration—which has been the case under every régime—or else of a party hostile to the Government, they take good care, however, not to fall out with the Prefecture. All other police administrations disappear, the one of the Prefecture remains. They will, therefore, never sacrifice their future to mere temporary benefits, and most often they get out of the difficulty by serving both parties at the same time.* More curious

* An absolute fact, to which there is scarcely an exception. The great instrument of the political police is the secret agent. There are two classes, the regularly incorporated one and the free lance. Among the latter there have been and are still some of high social position, as the following anecdote will prove. When Fouché had been appointed

still, they do not absolutely betray either of their employers, but give to each the information they are able to obtain. It remains with him who employs those dual-faced agents, perfectly well known at the Prefecture from long tradition, to suspiciously weigh their reports, to be on his guard against their indications. With some discernment and by carefully comparing their information with that which has come from other sources, one may succeed easily enough in striking a balance between the truth and the wilful or unconscious lie. It is only after a series of ingeniously organized verifications that the Prefecture accepts the value of certain information, especially if the latter is intended as a basis for some measure or action.

General Changarnier lacked those means of control; he was badly served, ill-informed, and to make matters worse his principal man, in whom he placed the greatest faith, was exactly the very one among our secret agents most anxious to court

Minister of Police by Louis XVIII., the King asked him if during the Empire he had not had him watched. He wanted to know the spies employed. Fouché hesitated, but the King insisting, Fouché ended by answering, "Well, Sire, if you wish to know, it was the Duke de Blacas." "And how much did he get for the job?" "Two hundred thousand francs per annum, Sire," was the answer. "That's right," said Louis XVIII. with a smile, "that was the sum, he did not cheat me, then; we went halves."—*Trans.*

favour with the Prefecture. He might betray us a little now and then to earn his salary with the General, but he would not have ventured upon any disclosure in any way injurious to us. It would have been, moreover, very difficult for him to do so, seeing that he was watched very closely himself, and he learned nothing at the Prefecture except that which we wished him to learn. Hence he became useful even in his treason. But, on the other hand, he gave us the most minute details of the doings of the General and his political friends, and it is thus that we were enabled to follow, step by step, the progress of this rash conspiracy, within the Assembly, of General Changarnier against the Chief of the State.

Information obtained from other quarters confirmed that of our agent. Hence it was plain to us that if the proposal of the quaestors was carried, its acceptance would be the signal for the attack, so long wished for and recommended by the most turbulent of the Chamber. Of course we had to take our measures in consequence.

The very day that the proposal of the quaestors was lodged with the Chamber, the Prince had sent for General de Saint-Arnaud and me to discuss the steps to be taken in view of the new eventualities that so gravely compromised the situation. Our

first combinations had necessarily to be modified. We had arranged everything on the supposition that the initiative should be taken by the chief power, we had only summarily provided for an aggression coming from the Assembly and General Changarnier; we had, therefore, to combine a new plan, and time was getting short.

Previous to the lodging with the Chamber of the Quaestors' Bill, I had felt confident of being able to assure the Prince that I should be informed at least twenty-four hours beforehand of any attempt at aggression, if they dared attempt it; consequently we should have had the necessary time to prepare for contingencies; but in the event of the proposal being carried the process of our adversaries would also be modified; we had to take counsel.

Two opinions were in presence of each other; the Prince wanted to act at the very moment of the voting of the bill, to have the troops ready, to surround the Palais-Bourbon even before the termination of the sitting, and to have the decree of the dissolution of the Assembly posted up. At the same time would appear the proclamation of the Prince to the army and his proclamation to the country, inviting the nation to dispose of her own destinies. In this combination the moral effect of a military demonstration was counted upon; a

severe blow at the spirit of the representatives was aimed at; it was especially intended to show the conspiring generals that the army, under the command of its hierarchical chiefs, proclaimed its adherence to the policy of the Prince, and thus to deprive the former of all hope of seducing the troops from their duty. The representatives were to be allowed to leave unmolested; the most zealous among them would be watched without having their liberty interfered with. Perhaps those measures might have been sufficient. General de Saint-Arnaud and myself were of opinion that more energetic ones were required. We brought the Prince over to our opinion and we decided upon the following combinations.

In the event of the quaestors' measure being voted, half of the Paris garrison would be immediately called out and the Palais-Bourbon surrounded. The representatives would be allowed to leave, but they would not be permitted to re-enter the palace; consequently they would either remain there, as voluntary prisoners unable to communicate with the outside world, or else they would quit the official building, and impair, for the purpose of resistance, the prestige always attached to the spot consecrated to the public power. At the same time the important strategical points of Paris would

be occupied; the streets patrolled by cavalry, orders would be given to allow no gatherings and to disperse by force any and every crowd. At the issue of the sitting, but only when reaching their own homes, the most active of the majority would be arrested. Immediately after the voting of the bill, the decree of the dissolution of the Assembly, the proclamations of the Prince, his appeal to the nation, his appeal to the army, would be posted up.

It had been decided that we should be present, General Magnan and myself, in one of the galleries at the sitting of the Chamber. At a signal from General de Saint-Arnaud, previously agreed upon, we were to immediately leave our places and proceed to the Tuileries, to the private office of General Magnan, where the Minister for War would join us. We would await there the result of the division and act either there and then, or adjourn our action accordingly.

There still remained the serious embarrassment of old, that of constituting an eventual Ministry. This time it was more than likely that the 'Quaestors' Bill would not pass, consequently that there would be no necessity to act; it was arranged that in case of such necessity the Prince would simply ask M. de Thorigny to remain at his post at the Interior. The events being the natural and

unavoidable result of the struggle provoked by the Chamber, M. de Thorigny would certainly not have refused his support, and it would have been loyal and energetic. Besides, we have said it already, it was exclusively the Ministry for War and the Prefecture of Police upon which devolved the initiative of decisive measures; it was there that the action wholly lay. The rôle of the Minister of the Interior consisted simply of a passive share in the responsibility of the enterprise. To accept this responsibility it only wanted a man of heart and of courage. M. de Thorigny possessed both. One might even admit that on the battle-field thus imposed by the Chamber itself, the entire Ministry would have loyally lent itself to support the Prince in his resistance. Not a member of the Cabinet doubted the real intentions of the promoters of the quaestors' measure; the acceptance of the project was to be the signal for aggression. To forestall them by a few hours and to use the public force to foil their criminal designs was therefore nothing more than the right of legitimate defence. The offensive might have aroused the susceptibilities of certain members of the Cabinet. No one would have refused to defend himself and uphold a struggle which the Government had not provoked.

No doubt, our new arrangements, hurriedly

decided upon in view of the passing of the quaestors' bill, afforded by no means all the guarantees of success of our carefully elaborated original plan. But we could not choose our own time; the Assembly fixed it for us, and notwithstanding our great dislike to engage upon the struggle under conditions that deprived us of a considerable part of our advantages, there was no way of retreat. Success, however, was not a matter of doubt with us; perhaps it would cost some terrible efforts, but we had made up our minds to win, and in similar circumstances faith and will are powerful auxiliaries. The only serious danger to be feared was the influence which the generals-deputies might exercise on the troops, above all General Changarnier, who might suddenly be invested with a semblance of regular authority to command the army, or at any rate, to levy a force intended to protect the Chamber. But this influence would naturally be exercised on the first regiments that came into contact with him, on those that surrounded the Palais-Bourbon. Those regiments would be selected with an eye to circumstances, and the peril might thus be minimised.

The examination of the proposed bill of the quaestors had been pushed with great activity. Both sides of the Chamber were swayed by an

equally strong impatience to have done with this formidable quarrel. The excitement had reached such a degree that the Assembly was incapable of devoting the least attention to any other question submitted to it. The Reporter, M. Vitet, hurried his work, and not later than the 15th November he lodged and read his report. In listening to the honourable deputy of the Right, one instinctively felt the painful position to which he was condemned. M. Vitet was one of the declared adversaries of the Elysée; but he meditated the overthrow of Louis Napoleon, or rather, his substitution by lawful means. To have recourse to sedition was repugnant to his nature, and it was not without some genuine qualms of conscience that he became the accessory of those who wished to conquer by such means. Consequently the first words of his report were an attempt to deny all compromising feeling of community of interest with the latter, and to attenuate the real sense, the drift of the proposal.

“To determine,” said M. Vitet, “whether there be any necessity to consider the measure proposed by your three quaestors, one must have examined it by itself, without any preconceived idea; one must thoroughly understand its intention and only see in it that which is. If it aims at creating either

a new right in favour of one of the great powers of the State, or merely to give a wider scope to a right already existing, you must without hesitation declare it inadmissible. But if, everything well weighed and considered, it only means to elucidate and regulate the exercise of an incontestable right, to bring to the knowledge of every one what is needful that no one should ignore, how can we nonsuit such a proposal ?

“The greater the disposition shown, outside these precincts, to invest this proposal with an exorbitant character and to magnify its consequences, the more should we strive to exactly measure its true meaning, its real drift, and to form no opinion until after an examination, as intent as if the very foundation of the question had been submitted to us.”

From the lips of any one but M. Vitet such language would have been taxed with duplicity, with ingenuousness perhaps. The high reputation and intelligence of the Reporter shielded him from all such insinuations. He simply underwent the dangerous effects of an illusion which too often possesses itself of the most eminent minds when blinded by passion, when carried away by party spirit. Whom could M. Vitet persuade that the proposal of the quaestors did not create a new

privilege? Who, in presence of the excessive agitation the proposal had aroused, could for one instant believe in this harmlessness which the Reporter so persistently claimed for it? And who would have admitted the justification which, as will be seen, he strove to give to the intentions of the authors of the bill? who, on the contrary, would not have perceived the real drift of the proposal in the hypothetical allegations refuted by M. Vitet when he said, "For a long while already experience has shown to the honourable quaestors the necessity of what they ask for, and they have easily convinced us, when they affirmed that it is not the political incidents which we are actually witnessing that have suggested the first idea of the proposal. To defer it any longer has seemed impossible to them; their responsibility would not suffer it.

"Hence," they say, "this is not a proposal suggested by actual circumstances. They as strenuously deny another imputation which has neither been spared to them; namely, that of wishing to provide the Assembly with the means to possess itself, as it were, of a portion of the army, by presently calling around it a whole body of troops not necessary to its defence."

Whatever care the Reporter had taken to lessen

the importance of the question submitted to the deliberations of the Chamber, he was unable to deny the serious preoccupations it had aroused. Forgetful of the contradiction between the argument of his report and its peroration, M. Vitet said to the Assembly: "One word only on the question of urgency. We do not think that it will meet with serious objections. Those who are most distressed at the discussion of like subjects must wish that such discussions should be rare. The urgency claimed for it will allow you to settle the question in one sitting."

The Reporter concluded by asking the Assembly to vote the proposal of the quaestors. He had, however, given it a more concise form, which only corroborated its essential provisions. The proposal adopted by the majority of the commission, and submitted to the approval of the Chamber, ran as follows:—

"Shall be promulgated as henceforth pertaining to the law, and inserted in the order of the day to the army, and posted up in all its barracks, Article 6 of the Decree of the 11th May, 1848, worded as here below.

"Article one, and only one.

"The President of the National Assembly is charged with the security of the Assembly within.

“ ‘In pursuance of which he shall have the right to summon such military forces and all other authorities whose co-operation he may judge necessary.

“ ‘The requisition may be addressed directly to all officers, commanders, or functionaries, who are bound to comply with them immediately, under the penalties provided by the law.’ ”

The reading of M. Vitet's report had been followed by a protracted agitation. Several groups demanded the adjournment of the debate; some in a spirit of conciliation, others with the hope of recruiting adherents to the proposal. The Government was anxious to make an end of this perilous agitation, and at the persistent request of the Minister for War, the discussion was fixed for the next sitting, Monday, 17th November.

The 17th November, every one was at his post. It was plain that the impending debate was one of those involving to the utmost degree the fate of the country. General Leflô, one of the authors of the measure, spoke first. In a paraphrase of M. Vitet's report, he affirmed once more the pacific intentions of the authors of the bill. No idea of aggression, no intention of diminishing the constitutional rights of the Chief of the State, had ever entered their minds. Their aim was merely to

provide Article 32 of the Constitution with a commentary it lacked, and to resuscitate the Decree of the 11th May, 1848, which some evil-disposed persons pretended to have been repealed. A great number of general officers especially had spontaneously communicated to General Leflô their doubts and hesitations with regard to what they should do in the event of a requisition from the President of the Chamber without the countersign of the Commander-in-Chief of the army of Paris. It became necessary to dispel those uncertainties. The proposal had no other aim ; it was conceived in the interests of the army and of its discipline. None but a benevolent motive should be attributed to it.

This was indeed carrying exaggeration too far, and it would have been better for the authors of the proposal to openly confess, if not their designs, at least their anxieties. If they had said to the Chamber, "We fear aggression on the part of the Prince against the Assembly, and that very shortly ; we ask you for the means to resist his enterprise and to protect the Assembly. We want for this an army to ourselves and a general to ourselves," every one would have understood the question put in that way ; but to torture truth in such a way as to present this implement of war as an olive branch, was to transgress the measure

of permissible dissimulation, and to breed the suspicion of still vaster designs than those that were suspected.

It is this sentiment that possessed itself of the Left of the Assembly. It saw, no doubt, facing it, or by its side, two adversaries determined to make an end of each other. Between the Right, which wanted to bring back the Monarchy, and Louis Napoleon, whom it credited with the thought of restoring the Empire, the Left hesitated, not knowing which of those two dangers it was best to combat. Its leading members insisted upon these points : that to the majority of the Chamber, rather than to Louis Napoleon, must be attributed the reactionary laws from which the Republic was suffering ; that the Monarchy, twice laid low, by the Republicans of 1830 and 1848, would enact cruel reprisals ; that on the contrary Louis Napoleon had no past to avenge, that his tendencies were democratic, and that, after all, one might obtain some benefit from them one day. The great majority of the Left made up its mind to reject the proposal.

In fact, it was in this sense that MM. Crémieux and Michel de Bourges spoke from the tribune. It was in vain that some of the reasonable members of the Right proposed a conciliating

amendment. Notwithstanding the important patronage of MM. Duke de Broglie, Admiral Cécille, Count Montalembert, Count de Flavigny, de Lagrenée, de Crouchy, Count Daru, the amendment was thrown out.

M. Thiers attached to the passing of the measure a supreme importance, and he brought to the discussion the ardour of a man who stakes his all-in-all. To his violent attacks the Minister for War opposed the clearest of arguments. He laid down general principles. He recognised the right of the Assembly to demand the troops necessary to its security, but he insisted that this requisition should come through the intermediary of the chief of the army. He reserved to the Minister for War the right to designate the commander of this contingent; he energetically vindicated the maintenance of unity in the command of the army; he would on no terms admit the possibility of hesitation in its ranks; he wanted to exclude from it all spirit of discussion or deliberation. It was the correct doctrine, the military doctrine, in all its vigour. If the division had been asked after the speech of the Minister for War, the result would not have been doubtful: the proposal would have been thrown out by an immense majority.

For a moment General Bedeau flattered himself

that he might throw confusion among this majority, perhaps to rally it to his cause, by forcing the Minister for War into a declaration which he imagined would produce a decisive impression on certain minds: General de Saint-Arnaud, had he or not caused to disappear from the barracks the few copies of the Decree of the 11th May which had survived the mutilation prescribed in 1849 by General Changarnier? That was the question to which General Bedeau required a categorical answer. It was couched in the following terms:—

“Is it true that the Decree of the 11th May, approved in its legal form by the honourable Chief of the Cabinet at that time, M. Odilon Barrot, posted up in the barracks by the then Minister for War, General Rulhière, who filled the same post only a few days ago—is it true that by order of the executive power, this Decree has been removed?”
(Great commotion.)

The *Moniteur* tells us that at that moment the Ministers for War and the Interior exchanged a few words, and seemed to consult with each other. Every one felt the importance of the answer the Minister was about to give, and it was amidst great excitement of the Assembly that General de Saint-Arnaud rose to reply to the question that

had been put to him. An anxious silence succeeded the tumult. The Minister for War replied in the following terms :—

“As I have had the honour of telling you, the Decree of the 11th May, 1848, having fallen into decay, never having been executed, was no longer posted up except in a small number of barracks. I did not wish to leave the troops a pretext for doubt and hesitation ; I have had it removed, there where it still remained.”

In this brief explanation the Minister had laid stress on every one of his words, as if to increase their value. His attitude showed an energetic resolution ; it was felt that a solution was near. Let us listen to the *Moniteur*, which alone can convey an exact idea of the spectacle afforded by this stormy end of the sitting. “At the moment that the Minister finishes his explanation an indescribable commotion reigns in the Assembly. The majority of the members have risen, a great many leave their seats, and a certain number rush to the Ministerial bench, where a lively discussion seems to take place. MM. Baze, Druet-Desvaux, and Crémieux rush simultaneously to the tribune.

“M. Dain : ‘Lodge an act of impeachment ; the Left will vote it !’

“Several members of the Left to M. Crémieux: ‘Move an impeachment, the Left will vote it!’

“M. Charras, endeavouring to make himself heard above the noise: ‘I demand the impeachment!’ (Increased noise and agitation.) M. Crémieux (turning to the Left): ‘You will vote it?’

“Several members of the Left, amongst whom we notice M. Madier de Montjau: ‘The question has not changed. We have no need to vote an appeal to the troops; they are with us.’

“The Assembly becomes altogether past control, and the ushers cannot prevail upon the members to return to their seats.”

At the moment that General de Saint-Arnaud left the Assembly, General Magnan and myself, who were in a gallery facing his bench, received the pre-arranged signal from him. We also went out, and in a few minutes found ourselves all three in the private room of General Magnan at the Tuileries. There we awaited the result of the division. If the bill was carried, we immediately put our plan decided upon into execution. If the bill was thrown out, we would confine ourselves to prevent all disturbance in the streets, where a great ferment was already noticeable.

Very shortly after our reaching the Tuileries,

the result of the division was brought to us by a representative. It was as follows :—

Number of Votes	708
Majority	355
Ayes	300
Noes	408

The quaestors' bill had been thrown out by a majority of 108.

The dignified words of the Minister for War had thrown confusion amongst the Right. Several of the members felt that the Government was ready to act, and the fear of immediate events had lost the bill a certain number of adherents on whom, at the beginning of the sitting, the authors had confidently relied. What was the upshot of this mis-carried attempt? For General Changarnier and his fellow-vanquished of the 17th November, a burning rage in their hearts, and the firm determination to take their revenge for this defeat, arms in hand; for us, the conviction that we must no longer defer the execution of our plans, unless we wished to see ourselves forestalled by our enemies.

And to those who would tell us that our apprehensions were unfounded, our alarm exaggerated, we would answer, "Take the *Moniteur* of the 17th November, consult the division list for those

of the representatives who voted in favour of the quaestors' bill, who claimed for the President of the Assembly the right of direct requisition of the troops and their chiefs, and you will see among the names the most persistent adversaries this same right of direct requisitions had hitherto met with, General Cavaignac and General Changarnier—General Changarnier, who in 1849 had been the first to also tear down in the barracks this same Decree of the 11th May, of which two years after he wished to extol the merits and revive the authority.

And why did this Decree which those two generals had publicly stigmatized as an attempt to infringe discipline, hierarchy, and unity of command, why did it all at once become with them a measure of protection? Why this sudden change of front? Why this flagrant contradiction? The reply to those questions is easy enough. Those men believed to have gained their end at last. A few professions of sympathy emanating from officers devoted to their cause had raised their hopes. They little minded, on the very day which they fondly hoped should be the one for action, to have this culpable recantation flung into their faces. They already beheld their success, and success would condone everything. If their words still

belied their secret designs, their voting-paper betrayed them. In fact, could there have occurred a more pertinent revelation of their projects, their conspiracy, their eagerness for action? Who could deny that in voting the quaestors' bill, in using their influence to get it accepted by their adherents, those two generals regarded it, not as a pledge of peace and tranquillity which they held out to dazzle some of the most gullible, but as an instrument of warfare by whose aid they meant to overthrow the Prince-President?

This again is the place to say to those whom our assertions offend: refer to the overwhelming testimony of one of our most violent adversaries, of one of your most favourite leaders, read M. Odilon Barrot once more, and you will be compelled to admit that at those two dates the same thought inspired the same man. What General Changarnier had not dared to undertake in 1850 he was resolved to do on the 17th November, and this famous signature, which he had been unable to obtain from M. Dupin, President of the Assembly, he hoped this time to force from him through the intermediary of the Chamber. "The President at Vincennes"—such was in 1850 the avowed aim of the General; such was his hope in 1851.

One may safely say that the question had been

submitted to the Assembly in those violent and decided terms. As much as we feel bound to praise the wisdom of those of the old Monarchical parties who refused to commit themselves by their votes to this sedition to which the zealots of their party wished to inveigle them, as much must we regret to see the latter associate themselves with a merciless war against the Chief of the State.

We thoroughly respect sincere political convictions and unwavering dynastical allegiance. We admire as right and honourable the efforts of a party to restore to the throne him who embodies its beliefs and its cause, provided, however, that they choose the right moment and the proper means.

That moment had offered itself to the three Monarchical parties after the revolution of 1848. France was plunged into anarchy. One might say that she had no Government; the field was free, the lists were open. Each party could appeal to the nation and ask her to restore its prince. If action was to be taken, assuredly 1848 was the time. * It was at that date that each party should, under some form or other, have proposed the candidature of the chief of its house to the throne. Not to do so was to tacitly abdicate. To do more, to co-operate in the elevation of a pretender other than one's own was, all mental or constitutional

reservations to the contrary, to openly abdicate; and that is what had been done. They had above all on the 10th December considered the salvation of the country, and the country had pointed out the man who, according to her, personified this salvation. The old parties had contributed to his elevation and to make him Chief of the State. This man, this Prince, he responded more and more each day to the confidence placed in him. He had restored order, brought back security, opened a prosperous horizon. And because his greatness increased, was this a sufficient reason to cease to support him? Because he grew stronger, was it a reason to contend against him? Because his power was about to become definitely and firmly established, was it a reason to overthrow him? Such an attitude was neither just nor patriotic. Those parties had been resigned to the 10th December; they could but continue to be resigned—logic compelled. It was vain to pretend that the expiration of the constitutional term of office in 1852 opened a new door to the dynastic hopes. Such an assertion would have been insincere. It was more than plain to every one that in 1852 there would be only two forces confronting each other: on one side the Prince and order, on the other revolution and the Jacquerie. All dynastical attempts would have

been crushed between these two powerful forces. The tentative moment was passed; patriotism demanded resignation. On the 10th December more had been done, perhaps, than was intended, but there was no going back, and we repeat, resignation only was opportune and patriotic.

To be just, to assign their true limits to the responsibilities of these parties at this critical period, it should be said that in general, and above all outside the Chamber, the attitude of the Monarchical parties was what it should have been, calm and moderate. And it is to render this homage that we separate them, as we have done, from this turbulent and passion-swayed group of representatives who, within the Assembly, provoked sedition and compromised both their cause and the true interests of the country.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR LAST CONFERENCES.

The Bill on the responsibility of the President of the Republic.—New intrigues of the parties.—The decisions they compel on our side.—Behind the scenes.—The Press.—The secret societies.—Two speeches of Louis Napoleon.—MM. de Saint-Arnaud, Magnan, de Persigny, and de Morny.—M. de Morny designated as Minister of the Interior.—Our conference at the Elysée on the 1st December.

ON the evening itself of the 17th November we were sent for from the Elysée. General de Saint-Arnaud and I rapidly discussed with the Prince what was to be done. During the night we had only to watch the doings of our adversaries. The next morning we were to have another conference to decide upon the steps dictated by circumstances.

Before going to the Elysée on the 18th November, I had already received a report informing me of the frame of mind of the vanquished of the previous day. If some had yielded to the dejection so frequently bred from defeat, the most violent had, on the contrary, shown an increase of zeal. Scarcely had one of their projects been condemned by the Chamber than they already meditated a new sur-

prise, to betray it into some measure, some resolution, some act, that might serve as a basis of their schemes.

By a singular coincidence, the very day that the quaestors' proposal had been discussed by the Assembly, a bill, framed by the Council of State with reference to the responsibility of the President of the Republic, had been laid on the table of the Assembly. In this bill, or rather by its side, the opportunity, which had just been allowed to escape, presented itself anew. A commission was appointed without delay. Care had been taken to compose it with the declared adversaries of the Prince. The possible revenge of the 17th November was already dawning on the horizon.* This time it was hoped to attract at least a part of the members of the Left. No sacrifice would be spared to ensure this conquest. Hence parliamentary intrigue and conspiracy resumed their course side by side and more actively than ever.

All those manœuvres were revealed to us, and it

* The committee entrusted with the examination of the bill on the responsibility of the depositaries of public authority had been appointed the 22nd November, 1851. It was composed as follows:—1st Bureau, M. Michel (de Bourges); 2nd, Duprat (Pascal); 3rd, Creton; 4th, Bechard; 5th, Crémieux; 6th, Berryer; 7th, Janvier; 8th, Monet; 9th, Arago (Emanuel); 10th, Dufaure; 11th, Cambarel de Leyval; 12th, Jules de Lasteyrie; 13th, Dufraisse; 14th, de Laboulie; 15th, Pradié.

became the more necessary to follow their progress that they were not the only perils that confronted us.

If the Monarchists, or rather the bell-wethers of the Right, contemplated possessing themselves of the public power, the demagogues, to whom those plans were by no means a mystery, judged, and rightly, that the attempt was impossible without a violent collision. Once the struggle entered upon, the first shots fired, the army divided into two camps perhaps, anything and everything might result from such a conflagration. And the secret societies, gathering all their strength at that very moment, might not this terrific blaze afford the Revolution another day of triumph?

For the demagogues no more propitious opportunity to spring to arms could surely present itself than an insurrection began by the Monarchists. Hence the most circumspect of the Mountain showed themselves very far-seeing indeed when they tried to calm the impatience of their friends, notably of the refugees in London, who wished to profit by the agitation of the latter sittings of the Assembly to attempt a general movement. Among the refugees in London a great number were living in the greatest misery; the relief that came from France grew smaller each day, the resources of the party

being devoted in preference to the purchase of arms and ammunition, and the necessitous exiles angrily rejected the recommendations to be patient. Their exasperation had reached such a point that they announced to those whom they called "the temporizers of the party," their determination to act, and if needs be, to organise an armed uprising without their co-operation.

We had in London, in the heart of the revolutionary French colony itself, a gang of secret police who kept us informed of the doings and sayings of the conspirators. Their departure was notified to us beforehand, and we could therefore have them either arrested on their arrival or rigorously watched, which often enabled us to discover those of their accomplices previously unknown to us. The London and provincial conspirators thus aiding each other to prepare for an uprising, the most impatient of the Right in the Assembly meditating aggression on their side, could we remain much longer under the constant apprehension of their menaces? I, for my part, did not think so, and in our meeting of the 18th November I asked for the immediate execution of our plans originally decided upon. General de Saint-Arnaud showed himself even more impatient to have done with it, and the date of Thursday, the 20th November, which I suggested,

was eagerly accepted by him. The Prince, without telling us the motive of his preference, inclined to a postponement of a few days. He spoke of the week following, and at his desire the day decided on was Tuesday, the 25th November.

In the midst of our preparations for that day we were summoned on the Saturday morning to the Elysée. As each of us saw the Prince separately every day, this collective summons caused us to apprehend a further modification of his plans for the day of action. In fact he asked for a fresh adjournment, and proposed Tuesday, the 2nd December. Tuesday, the 2nd December, was therefore fixed upon. Finally, and to conclude this detail, we must state that on Friday, the 28th November, the Prince proposed once more to alter the day for one in the next week but one. We could not consent to these repeated adjournments. Everything was ready; the necessity for action became each day more urgent. An unforeseen incident might become the pretext for a riot; the secret societies were sitting in permanence, and began to distribute their arms and ammunition; General Changarnier was most zealously urged to take the offensive by the forlorn hope of the Chamber. He had mentioned the 4th December as the possible date for his doing so. It became

imperative not to let our enemies forestall us and to preserve the advantages of the initiative. We insisted, therefore, that nothing should be changed in our last arrangements, and finally the Prince gave in. The 2nd December remained the date irrevocably fixed upon.

We have already informed the reader of what was going on in the Chamber, what was being meditated in the secret conferences of all shades. We have disclosed our preparations at the Elysée. We will complete those points by giving the impression produced on public opinion by what was perceptible to it in those exciting periods of this grand drama.

The *Coup d'État* and the insurrection had so long been talked of, that scepticism had succeeded to fear with some, to hope with others. Nevertheless, cynical and indifferent as people had become about these periodical rumours, they seemed this time to attach more weight to them than usual. There was a general belief that the end was nigh. In the drawing-rooms, in the clubs, in every public spot, there was no other topic of conversation. "Who'll begin, Louis Napoleon or Changarnier?" that was the question asked everywhere.

Behind the parliamentary scenes excitement had reached its highest pitch. Every one was concocting something. The most inventive gave themselves

full play; above all, those who, not belonging to any extreme shade, would not abandon the hope of some adjustment. Every day saw the birth of a new system, and there were not wanting busy-bodies to bring those tardy lucubrations to the Elysée. But an understanding had become impossible, a parliamentary solution a mirage. The throwing out of the bill for the revision of the Constitution had destroyed the last chance. Each party felt conscious of it, each party made ready for the strife, and to condemn one's self to wait at such a moment was to court defeat without having contended.

The press naturally associated itself with those movements—incited them, as it were. Each morning those organs that served their parties as banners egged them on to battle; their articles smelt of powder. Among those inciting publications, public opinion was particularly struck by a leader in the *Constitutionnel* of the 24th November.

The importance of the article itself was increased by the circumstance of M. de Cassagnac being justly known to take his inspirations from the Elysée. The Prince had often charged him with preparing public opinion in favour of his plans. The article of the eminent publicist was considered a preface to the *Coup d'État*. Its title, "The Two

Dictatorships," resumed in itself the great pending question.

"Never," said M. de Cassagnac, "have there been hatched as many conspiracies, as many surprises prepared, as at this moment, in the higher circles of society and among the leaders of the old parties. The ambitious and the factious object to order being restored, to work being assured, to business reviving, if society, in a sound and safe condition, is to escape their plans of domination and of being worked upon at a profit. Sooner would they see the streets of Paris up, every foreigner leave it in a hurry, every shop closed, hear the mob sing the *Ça ira!** the population frightened out of their wits by the stump orators of the clubs, sooner . . . sooner would they resign themselves to anything, short of seeing their importance impaired.

"We have already escaped by a miracle more than one of those forcing-house revolutions, concocted in two or three political drawing-rooms, meditated in the editorial room of some newspaper, arranged in the lobbies of Parliament; but miracles are rare, and it would be rash to count upon them.

* A revolutionary song which in 1789 a street-singer named Ladré improvised on the music of "Le Caillon National," by Bécourt.—*Trans.*

“France may wake up to-morrow, the next or any other day, to the terrific noise of a universal crash ; if she perish beneath the ruins, she should at least know who prepared them, whence they come. We shall advance nothing but what is said openly in the political world, and assuredly we are not bound to more discretion than the conspirators themselves.

“On Monday last, a week to-day, we were within a hair's breadth of civil war. The parties who dispute with each other the supreme power had flung a proposal into the Assembly, aiming less at giving an army to the Legislative powers than to provoke indecision and disorder among the troops, and to provide the opportunity and the means to a daring general to entice a regiment or two from their duty. If the Assembly had been weak enough to consider for a moment the proposal submitted to it, an impeachment would have been wrung from it. The conspirators had prepared their blow. Armed with a vote more or less conclusive, more or less explicit, they would have arrested the Ministers there and then, and if success had crowned this first step, endeavoured to carry off the President.

“But as may be supposed, the President of the Republic and his friends do object somewhat to

being improved off the face of the Republic in so peremptory a fashion. Hence the assailants would have been welcomed with rifle-shot or something better still; and there and then the battle in the streets would have begun. The contingency remained possible up till half-past seven; the vote of the Assembly knocked it on the head. Assuredly nothing can be more senseless, more criminal, than such a design. It is a downright fact, nevertheless, and there is not a living soul in the political world who ignores its details. -

“This flagrant conspiracy, allowing the President of the Republic no respite, has for its authors men in Parliament, the avowed chiefs of the Legitimist and Orleanist parties, deeply divided among each other, but united in a common bond of hatred against the people’s elect of the 10th December. This conspiracy has been organized for the last eighteen months; and at the time when a notable general occupied the Tuileries, its drawing-rooms were the meeting place of a number of eminent political personages, who debated the arrest of Louis Napoleon and his impounding at Vincennes. There can be no doubt upon the subject. A former Prime Minister of Louis Philippe, who was present at those meetings, warned the President of the Republic of what was being plotted against him.

The conspirators' aim is to create a dictatorship, to govern with the support and under the control of the actual Assembly, which would be indefinitely continued under its new appellation of the Convention. The dictator is pointed out by everybody: it is General Changarnier." M. de Cassagnac wound up his article with this warning, significant when emanating from his pen: "The public power entrusted with and responsible for the maintenance of order is, as may easily be supposed, informed of all their designs and intrigues; and though they do not feel it, they have each the firm and resolute hand of the law suspended at an inch from their coat-collar."

If ever an article caused a profound sensation, it was assuredly that of M. de Cassagnac.* He had displayed all his talent, all his "go." He had treated the question as a politician; and one beheld already the dauntless wrestler who later on, in the tribune of the Chamber, would prove himself the eloquent champion of Conservative principles.

If the journals devoted to the Elysée held this language, made themselves the echoes of the law-abiding, and asked to be delivered from those incessant menaces against the government of Louis

* Granier de Cassagnac, father of the present duelling journalist.—*Trans.*

Napoleon, the demagogical organs were not behind. They preached civil war, demanded an appeal to arms within brief delay, and thus created a powerful excitement.

To those various causes for agitation was added one other, which to the capital itself became a serious matter. Paris had to elect a representative to the new Assembly; the election was fixed for the 30th November. The public meetings sanctioned during electoral periods resounded each day with the most subversive language. I had been compelled to have several of those improvised clubs closed, notably the one held at the *Barrière de Fontainebleau*; and I had handed those street-corner orators who openly preached the most incendiary doctrines over to the authorities. I had also prohibited another meeting which was held at the *Barrière des Martyrs*, and to which all the demagogues of the adjacent faubourgs flocked in crowds. In spite of this interdict a meeting had been held in the same building; more than 1,500 Socialists took part in it. I had been obliged to have recourse to force to put an end to the scandalous proceedings of which this meeting was the scene. My agents had stoutly acquitted themselves, and notwithstanding the resistance of the principal leaders, the law had prevailed. But each day

witnessed similar attempts at revolt against the authorities, and each day witnessed, also, new arrests of those who distributed arms and by other means zealously prepared the projected uprising.

As may be seen, agitation prevailed everywhere : among the press, among the people, among the secret societies. It was undoubtedly most violent in the very heart of the Assembly itself.

If from the 31st October, 1849, to this month of November, 1851, the contest, notwithstanding some outbursts, had been slow between Louis Napoleon and Parliament, it has been seen by now that this contest suddenly assumed an exceedingly intense character. Time was getting short ; the fatal term of 1852 was at hand, and no camp would willingly face its hazards. If the parties prepared themselves at last for the supreme effort whence might spring their triumph, Louis Napoleon on his side wished to save the country, and the hour had come to devote himself to this grand task.

We have mentioned the supreme and just importance attached by the Prince to absolute secrecy with regard to his real designs, to his plan of action, to its date of execution ; but the silence which he demanded from others and imposed upon himself also was not incompatible with random allusions to what he might do one day. Those oft-repeated

allusions had on the contrary thrown opinion out of its reckoning. On the very eve of the decisive moment, he resumed once more his favourite method of reassuring the country on her fate, of reasserting, as he had already done at Dijon, his confidence in the future.

To the officers of the regiments newly arrived in Paris the Prince said :

“In receiving the officers of the various regiments of the army who succeed each other as the Paris garrison, I congratulate myself to see them animated by the military spirit which was our glory once, and which to-day provides our security. Your duties, you have ever discharged them with honour, whether on African ground or French soil ; and you have always, amidst the most difficult trials, preserved discipline intact. I trust that those trials will not recur, but if grave circumstances brought them back once more and compelled me to appeal to your devotion, it would not fail me, I am sure, because you know I would not ask you to do aught that is incompatible with my rights ‘granted to me by the Constitution,’* with the honour of a soldier, with the welfare of the country ; because I have placed at your head men

* Those six words were added to the official reports. Louis Napoleon did not speak them.—*Trans.*

who possess all my confidence and deserve yours ; because if ever the hour of danger struck I should not do as did the Governments that preceded me, and say to you, 'Go ; I follow you,' but 'I go ; follow me.' ”

Such language could not fail to inspire confidence to the army, to reassure the well-disposed, and, above all, to intimidate the enemies of Louis Napoleon rather than warn them.

To the French exhibitors of the London Universal Exhibition, the Prince said on the 25th November :

“In presence, then, of those unexpected results, I can but repeat : How great this France could be if she were allowed to mind her genuine interests, to reform her institutions, instead of being incessantly disturbed, on one side by demagogical ideas, on the other by Monarchical hallucinations.

“Do these demagogical ideas proclaim a truth? Certainly not ; they spread everywhere the error and the lie. Anxiety precedes them, disappointment follows, and the resources employed to repress them are so many losses to the most urgent improvements, to the relief of misery.

“As for the Monarchical hallucinations, without exposing the country to similar dangers, they

nevertheless and equally stop all progress, all serious labour.

“One fights instead of marching. Men heretofore ardent promoters of the prerogatives of royal authority, convert themselves into *conventionnels* in order to disarm the power born from popular suffrage. We see those who have suffered most from, most loudly wailed at, revolutions, provoke a new one; and this with the sole aim of eluding the national will, of preventing the movement that transforms societies from pursuing its peaceable current. Those efforts are in vain. *Everything that becomes a necessity of the times must be accomplished.*”

The transparency of those last words was striking enough, and talking of them with us in the evening at the Elysée, the Prince asked himself if he had not said too much. If the excitement to which Paris was already a prey could have increased, assuredly those words would have done it.

The political fever and the revolutionary agitation had become so intense that for a moment we thought to have delayed our plans too long by fixing their execution at the 2nd December. With great trouble I had been able to convey through the intermediary of General Changarnier's confidential agent a few words that might allay

the violent alarms of himself and his small conclave, but they remained on the alert and actively pursued their preparations for the struggle. Amidst painful anxiety we had reached the 30th November, the day on which a representative was to be elected in Paris. The election went off without any disturbance.* Two days only separated us from the 2nd December. The moment had come again to treat the Ministerial question once more. In those last moments there was less danger in bringing it forward than at the period when we had first occupied ourselves with it. The resistance of the Prince was the same. He had come in very close contact, during the recent crisis, with the men whom he had naturally designated. Nearly all counselled pacific and illusionary solutions, which denoted plainly enough that they feared an appeal to force, and that they declined beforehand to associate themselves with any act inaugurated in that way. Given that there was no properly constituted Ministry at the early hours of the 2nd December, it appeared none the less necessary that there should be a Minister of the Interior to serve as intermediary between the Prince and the

* M. Devinck, a member of the Paris Municipal Council, and Conservative candidate, had been elected by 52,369 votes. The Opposition had abstained.

Prefects, and to transmit the news from Paris to the provinces. After much hesitation the Prince had definitely fixed upon M. de Morny. What had been the nature of this gentleman's last and successful exhibition of skill and persistence I never knew. The Minister for War and myself were told both together that M. de Morny would be our third colleague on this eventful day, and that the Prince had but a few moments before informed him of this decision.

The trio for action was therefore definitely fixed upon under the supreme direction of their valiant master. MM. de Saint-Arnaud at the War Office, de Morny at the Interior, de Maupas at the Prefecture of Police had to attack on the 2nd December the solution of this great social problem, proposed by the year 1852. A fateful date, a menace prospectively but irretrievably fixed, which would paralyze trade and industry, ruin credit, and frighten Europe, which was watching our convulsions; a date of grief and blood if we had let the eleventh hour of the presidential power go by, and allowed the demagogic hordes to overwhelm us; a date of deliverance if we succeeded in emerging triumphantly from this great enterprise which the heart of the Prince had boldly conceived.

We have often had to speak already of those

men, who by their counsel or by their action, became the auxiliaries of the Prince on the 2nd December, MM. de Saint-Arnaud, de Morny, de Persigny, and Magnan. A few words about each will not be without interest.

General de Saint-Arnaud was one of those men whose name will live in history. Africa had been the promised land to him. He had found in it a hundred occasions for the display of his bravery and military aptitude. His preferment had been rapid and deserved. Marshal Bugeaud, whose judgment in those matters was tantamount to law, had predicted the highest destinies for General de Saint-Arnaud.

After a brilliant expedition in Kabylia, he had been called to an important command in the army of Paris, that of the second division, occupying the whole of the left bank of the Seine. The day that this post was intrusted to him, he was regarded as the Minister for War of the near future, the Minister of the Solution, the Minister of the *Coup d'État*.

To the political world and to Paris, General de Saint-Arnaud was a new figure. People studied him with interest. He did not attempt to elude this kind of inquisition; he remained the natural, candid, and jovial fellow nature had made him. People were not long in finding out the

man's worth. He quickly won a good deal of sympathy.

The general had every quality to please. His winning features reflected the subtlety of mind; the vigorous intellect was shown in the slightest conversation; everything in him bespoke superiority. What struck one first of all was his confident bearing. There stood the man sure of himself and accustomed to success. In important discussions General de Saint-Arnaud always saw the lofty side of things. His was a soul full of grandeur; he has shown it in the events that rendered his name illustrious. Nobody possessed in a higher degree the qualities necessary to the task he had to accomplish. Brave, resolute, he saw the hour of peril approach without the least emotion. He had a marvellous faculty of attracting sympathy; the wish to please and to second him was a kind of stimulant to his subordinates. In a very short time he had the army of Paris in his hands, as it were. It had confidence in and was ready to follow him everywhere. He might boldly lead it to action.

General Magnan was worthy to figure by the side of General de Saint-Arnaud. One must have seen and known General Magnan to properly estimate this finely constituted nature. His sympathetic address inspired confidence. His brief

language breathed candour. Under the mask of great *bonhomie*, which rendered him accessible to everybody, one felt the power to command. He did not frighten one, but he commanded respect. Good, affectionate, and tender with his own, he was worshipped by the companions of his daily life; he was sincerely beloved by all who had intimate relations with him.

As a soldier, General Magnan was very favourably noticed by his fellow-officers. They proclaimed him one of the best tacticians in the army. He had a great faculty for organization; he was proficient in the science of war, and if circumstances had placed him in presence of important problems, he would have risen to their level. He had all the qualities required for the chief command—science, a quick eye, equally quick decision, firmness, courage, and even the soldier-like beauty that never fails to enhance the prestige of moral qualities.

Upon these two illustrious soldiers devolved the military part of the enterprise; but side by side with the active share was the passive one, counsel. Amongst the men who had zealously pushed the Prince to a decisive solution like the one which was preparing, we must place M. de Persigny foremost.

The judgments on M. de Persigny are generally distinguished by an excess of praise or an excess of severity. At times he is represented as the beneficent prompting angel of the Prince in the happy days of the Empire ; at others people persist in seeing nothing in him but a political embryo, the man of adventure and shady combinations.

M. de Persigny's character was decidedly out of the common, but it offered the strangest contradictions. Grand inspiration, enlightened ideas, revealed themselves in him side by side with the most astonishing visionary theories. Thus M. de Persigny often became a precious counsellor to hear, but scarcely less dangerous to listen to. One might extract the elements of useful resolutions from the numberless combinations every political incident suggested to him, but it was prudent not to accept his counsel save under the reservation of a scrupulous examination and a rigorous control.

Indifferent to practice—to which, in fact, he remained a stranger all his life—M. de Persigny delighted in the exposition of theories of all kinds, and went out of his way, as it were, in search of the most abstract subjects.

His predilections had always leaned to politics. He was for ever studying the great questions of

State, and for every possible foreseen and unforeseen event he had found, in his meditations, a solution which he loved to expound to some faithful admirers. At such moments he expressed himself with great ardour, with the eloquence of a passionate and sincere believer, which in fact he remained, even in his errors.

In grave conjunctures he was a man of great resources, if it so happened that the circumstance was one of those upon which he had a theory ready. To invite him to consider an unforeseen fact was to expose one's self to a hazardous appreciation of the same. M. de Persigny was a man one had to lay in wait for. One caught him at times, but it would not do to interrogate him. It is not saying too much to assert that now and then he had genuine flashes of political genius. He made both the Prince and the country profit by them, and in those may be found the causes of his elevation; but as everything is contrast in this strange nature, side by side with the services he was able to render are lamentable errors, from which the Prince and the country suffered equally.

The expression of his features was sad. He voluntarily isolated himself, even amidst a crowd, and generally paid no attention to any conversation he had not provoked himself. His temper was very

changeable, and often caused him much unpleasantness. The slightest disappointment, the smallest hurt to his feelings, provoked violent fits of passion which he was unable to control, and which he was the first to regret when he had regained his composure, for he was essentially good-natured, kind, and generous, and most anxious to make up for any slight he caused. M. de Persigny had been brought up in the school of adversity. He had known the sorrows of exile and captivity. He had nobly borne these trials for the sake of his Prince, his ideas, and his country. He had faith in the Empire. When the Empire seemed nothing but a chimerical vision, he beheld it on the horizon as the inevitable consequence of the commotions France was undergoing. Bold to the verge of rashness, he had shown that he was prepared to sacrifice his life to the triumph of his cause.

One word paints the man. M. de Persigny was an apostle.

M. de Morny has been judged in various ways : favourably by those whose opinions could only be based upon certain appearances ; the reverse by those who came into very close contact with him, and who could preserve their independent judgment with regard to him.

Brought up by others than his parents, his infancy had lacked those precious family examples, those precepts which from the tenderest age follow us, without our being aware, throughout the course of our existence, stand by our side amidst the most violent tempests, and support us in our final hours by aiding us to forge a link between the entrance to and the exit from life.

Left to direct his own studies, to choose his own career, he fell a prey to the hesitations natural to youth. He tried everything—literature, art, science, political economy, and succeeded in preserving a superficial tinge of each of those attempts.

On reaching manhood he abandoned his abstract studies. From his very childhood, tales with reference to his birth had been told to him, well calculated to set a boy dreaming. The dreams had left an inordinate ambition, a love of notice, a determination to rise at any cost. He thought of seeking fame in the career of arms, and showed himself a brilliant officer in Africa; but, save to transcendent merit, the path to glory is a long one in the soldier's profession. Young de Morny would not submit to these delays, and claimed from industry the notoriety to which fortune is allowed to pretend. There he yielded to an erroneous

impression. Industry does not improvise wealth. It holds it out as a reward for prolonged efforts and wise and patient combinations. Speculation only can procure riches in one day, on the penalty, however, of making her favourite rue her largess next morning by ruin or dishonour.

M. de Morny would see nothing before him but the most smiling hopes. He abandoned industry for speculation and asked the Stock Exchange to provide for his future. Paris became his centre of operations, and the representation of the country, which a lucky chance had placed in his path, allowed him to utilize the political pedestal for his enterprises. He took rapidly and completely to every modern custom. His time was divided between the dissipations of the fashionable world and the less distinguished society of those speculation-mongers from whom he asked the fortune he endeavoured to build up. With those sort of people he succeeded in ridding himself of the pompousness, scarcely to be explained, which he fancied his birth imposed. He affected a kind of jovial good-fellowship and gained considerably by showing himself in that character.

The Count de Flahaut entertained the most tender affection for M. de Morny. He had watched over his political career and given him all the

benefits of his powerful protection.* It was by his advice that M. de Morny, notwithstanding the favour he had enjoyed with the Orleans Princes, endeavoured to win the same from Louis Napoleon. After having been an ardent Orleanist under the Government of July, M. de Morny became a Bonapartist at the first glimmerings of the exalted fate in store for the Prince. He became one of his most assiduous courtiers, and we have already seen the efforts by which he succeeded in getting himself appointed as his minister. In this high station he displayed great courage, sound sense and tact, but for lack of political experience and knowledge he remained as a statesman below what he might have been if more serious antecedents had prepared him for the part circumstances entrusted him with. The Prince judged him in that way, and what is more,

* Count de Flahaut de la Billarderie was at one time as well known in English as in French society. After Waterloo he spent more than ten years in England, where he married the daughter of Admiral Keith. In 1842 he returned to London as Ambassador of Louis Philippe to the Court of St. James, until 1846 or '47. The Count de Morny was commonly supposed to be his illegitimate son by Queen Hortense, the mother of Napoleon III. M. de Maupas' appreciation of M. de Morny's character is just perhaps, but one-sided undoubtedly. Count de Morny had many good traits, one of them his exceeding great charity. It would require a more extended biographical notice than I am justified in giving to show the real M. de Morny.—*Trans.*

all that has been said to the contrary notwithstanding, did not like him, which explains the little store he often set by his advice.

M. de Morny knew that the principal condition of importance was at this period, as under all personal governments, the favour of the Chief of the State. Consequently he displayed all his ingenuity in making people believe that he enjoyed this consideration, and he succeeded. Hence he owed his importance to his skill rather than to his merit.

A commonly received opinion is that M. de Morny exercised a salutary influence on the destinies of the Empire. Such is not our opinion. If he showed himself full of courage on the 2nd December, others would have borne equally well, had the post been confided to them, this enviable burden. If he succeeded in gaining a real influence over the legislative body, his courtesy and tact were no doubt the principal causes; but at the time when he presided over this Assembly, it sufficed to be the delegate of the Chief of the State to wield an almost irresistible sway. At any rate, he made the Prince cruelly expiate the services he may have rendered him, by standing forth, in the interest of his own popularity, as the promoter of many of those pernicious reforms to which

France owes her misfortunes ; in fact, in that fatal campaign that led to the ill-regulated liberty of the press and to the law on public meetings, M. Emile Olivier's original and principal accomplice was M. de Morny.

M. de Morny caused the Empire another and grave moral prejudice. In this foundering of all principles which we witness to-day there are still some that survive. If they are not always applied very vigorously to one's self, one wishes at least to see them applied by others. It is thus that France expects the men that govern her to abstain personally from and to have no interest in any industrial enterprise or speculation. The hazardous speculations of M. de Morny not only brought discredit upon the office he held, but the noise they provoked was such that public opinion took umbrage at it. It imagined to have found a kind of disclosing symptom in these traffickings. The enemies of the Government did not fail to discount this error, and there, where people should have seen nothing but an individual dereliction, they strove to prove a moral decadence in the higher spheres of the supreme power.

To be exact one might say of M. de Morny : he was a man of exceeding elegance and rare tact ; he was ever brave, capable and powerful sometimes ;

he was adventurous and compromising in public affairs ; but his name and his acts caused great noise. This was his ambition ; he had the satisfaction of attaining it.

After this there is no need to explain the difficulties the name of M. de Morny provoked in the ministerial preliminaries, but the hour for a consideration of persons was gone by. During the day of the 1st December M. de Morny was present for the first time at one of our meetings ; the Prince, General de Saint-Arnaud, and I initiated him to the details so long decided upon ; after which we settled a question which to me was of supreme importance.

The Prefect of Police has at all times occupied *de facto* a rank almost equal to that of the ministers among the superior members of the Government. But though the Executive under the monarchy as well as since has practically and within certain limits held him independent of the Minister of the Interior, by admitting him daily to the direct transaction of business with the Chief of the State without the intermediary of this Minister, the latter remained his hierarchical chief nevertheless, and could give him his orders, thereby paralyzing his will and his initiative at a given moment. In view of the grave circumstances upon which we

were entering a situation such as that was conducive to some real danger. A large part of the responsibility would weigh directly upon me; I was bound to claim my absolute independence, my full freedom of action. The Prince understood it thus, and M. de Morny made no objection to absolve me from his authority. Besides, he was only to enter upon his functions on the 2nd December at a quarter-past six in the morning; at that hour the *Coup d'État* would be an accomplished fact, if success was to crown our hopes.

I had equally to take measures to emancipate myself from the supremacy of the military power. We were to act under the conditions of a state of siege. And the state of siege immediately deprives the civil authorities of their most notable attributes, to confide them for the time being to the military authorities. In order to give me back such powers as the law would take from me, an order of the Minister for War, by which he renounced the attributes which the proclamation of the state of siege conferred upon him to, restitute them to me, seemed to us to meet the case. General de Saint-Arnaud understood that nothing was to bar my progress; he accepted and signed an act of delegation which established the exact nature of our reciprocal relations.

The act read as follows :—

“The Minister for War,

“Considering the decree proclaiming the state of siege within the territory of the first military division,

“Decrees :

“We delegate to the Prefect of Police all those of his powers whereof the state of siege deprived him.

“The Minister for War,

“A. DE SAINT-ARNAUD.

“PARIS, *the 2nd December, 1851.*”

After having settled some more details we appointed to meet finally after the reception at ten in the evening at the Elysée.* We were to leave the drawing-rooms separately and repair to the Prince's private room for our last conference. The hour for the grand solution was nigh.

* The Prince was “at home” on Mondays, consequently Monday, 1st December, was a reception day.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NIGHT BETWEEN THE 1ST AND 2ND DECEMBER.

The soirée of the 1st December at the Elysée.—Our last conference in the Prince's private room.—The "Mémoires" of M. Claude; their impostures and their calumnies.—The part of each in the night of the 1st and 2nd December.—Colonel de Béville at the national printing works.—My private room from three till seven in the morning.—My instructions to the commissaries of police.—Precautions taken to avert suspicion.—The Republican Guard.—The direction of Mazas.—The part of the secret police.—The lower strata of demagoguery.—Our latest informations about the generals and representatives who were to be arrested.—The night reports of the state of Paris.—Had we the law and right on our side?

THE evening of the 1st December offered no incident worthy of record. The conversation turned upon the political incidents of the last few days. Just to keep their tongues in practice, the guests spoke of the *Coup d'État* as they had spoken of it for the last twelvemonth, and above all within the last few weeks. The Prince bore his share of the conversation with his ordinary composure; nothing betrayed the slightest preoccupation in him. Shortly after ten General de Saint-Arnaud and I left the reception rooms by the principal door so as to evoke no suspicion, and made our way by the courtyard to the private room of the Prince, whither

he had preceded us in company with M. de Morny. At ten minutes past ten we were all assembled. M. de Persigny had been sent for by the Prince to join us. We have already said it, the President felt deeply grieved to see his faithful companion of the days of peril and exile debarred from an active part in the *Coup d'État*. He regretted to let lie fallow at such a moment this chivalric devotion, this heart eager to share the strife. By admitting him in this way to our last conference he wished to give him a proof of his confidence and his affection.

It was in fact to discharge a debt of the heart to thus associate M. de Persigny with the accomplishment of the 2nd December. No one more than he had long ago pushed the Prince to this needful solution. They had at various times examined together the different means to execute this grand project; and at this previous period, when unexpected hesitations and defections had almost wrecked the resolve for a *Coup d'État*, it was M. de Persigny who, after having contributed largely to the preparing of the elements, was the last to abandon a hope so dear to his heart.*

* In the preparation for the *Coup d'État* which was to be made on the 17th December, and of which we have already said a few words, the Prince had for auxiliaries M. de Persigny and Colonel Fleury, both belonging to his military household, and his most intimate confidants.

Besides, M. de Persigny brought the complementary support of an experience gained from long meditation on a favoured subject.

Many and many a fable has been built on this last interview. Many and many a pompous sentence has been cited, such as men never indulge except when excitement colours and dramatizes the most simple thoughts and actions. This final meeting partook of none of the exceptional character people wished to give to it. A spectator ignorant of what was really taking place would have supposed that the most commonplace interests or current affairs were being discussed, so complete was the calm in the Prince's room.

Each of us, the President first, read once more the proclamations which a few hours later were to cover the walls of the capital and tell France of her new destinies. General de Saint-Arnaud and I enumerated once more the whole of the measures we had prepared; we both renewed our expressions of confidence in our orders being executed, and separated. The Prince shook hands with us as he would have done on the eve of any ordinary day, calm and confident as are those lofty dispositions who need make no efforts to rise to critical situations, and who find themselves lifted to their level by remaining within the simplicity of their

natures, within the genuine tranquillity of their characters.

Let us add that before separating the Prince insisted upon sharing with General de Saint-Arnaud the modest sum he had in his cash box. This cash box was none other than the right-hand drawer of his writing table. The Prince lifted a tray which contained his petty cash, then taking a small box that was at the bottom of the receptacle : "This is all my wealth," he said gaily, "take half of it, General; you may want it to-morrow to bestow some gratifications." The box contained 40,000 francs in bank notes, and twenty *rouleaux* of gold of 1,000 francs each; the General took ten of the latter, and the Prince kept the remainder of this modest treasure.

This meeting of the 1st December at the Elysée is one of those circumstances that have most powerfully inspired the inventive and mendacious skill of a pretended M. Claude, one of the pamphleteers to whom we have alluded in our preface. However painful it may be to have to pick up the impostures of such people, we felt bound in the interests of truth to overcome our dislikes and to make the sacrifice.

This book was written when appeared the "Mémoires of M. Claude," one of those unwhole-

some publications invented nowadays by the spirit of speculation; one of those tales of doubtful alloy which aim before everything at whetting public curiosity by the scandal they promise in order to reap the reward in ready cash.* This libel, from the point of view of notoriety, has a perfidious advantage over any and all of the others, viz. the name of its author—if it be that M. Claude is the author, a fact which has absolutely been contested. But be the “Mémoires of M. Claude” apocryphal or not, the post occupied by this man in the past may contribute to the belief in the accuracy of what he writes. It is only in consideration of this that we will grant the “Mémoires of M. Claude” the honours of some categorical denial in this place.

M. Claude furnishes such minute details of what passed at the Elysée in our final interview on the

* I beg leave to refer the reader to one or two articles on the subject of “Les Mémoires de M. Claude” which appeared in the *Saturday Review* of 1882. The writer understood his subject thoroughly, and the articles sum up the value of the publication more severely, though not more justly, than does M. de Maupas. It is the plague spot of French history that one cannot find an impartial account of any important event in any history proper, and has to wade through numberless “memoirs” to get at a proximate appreciation of the truth. There is little doubt that the sum named by M. de Maupas is correct, but according to Victor Hugo gold was to be had for the asking on the day of the *Coup d'État*.—*Trans.*

evening of the 1st December that in reading them one might be led to believe that he himself was present in the Prince's room. Only every one of those details is an error or a calumny. Let us take them one by one.

We will take the errors first.

Vol. i. p. 185. "At that moment," says M. Claude, "my prefect was waiting in the private room of the Prince for the reception to terminate, so that he might take his orders. . . ."

An incorrect assertion. The Prince had left the reception rooms at ten o'clock with M. de Morny, and repaired directly to his private apartments by the door of the last drawing-room where hung the portrait of Queen Hortense. At the same moment General de Saint-Arnaud and I had left the reception rooms by the opposite door, and after crossing the hall and the courtyard arrived at the Prince's private room scarcely two minutes after he had entered it with M. de Morny and M. de Persigny, who had been waiting for him in M. Mocquart's private room.

Farther on. "At midnight M. de Morny joined his accomplices at the Elysée. . . ." What I have just said shows this to be another error. Let me add that at eleven o'clock every one had left the Prince's room, that the Prince himself had gone to his apartments, and consequently that any one

who presented himself there *at midnight* would have found the place shut up.

Farther on, still the same page. "For the last hour M. de Maupas had been waiting, seated before the placards that were to cover the walls of Paris that same night. Morny was the last to come into the room." As I have already shown, M. de Morny was the first to arrive with the Prince in his room, and so far from having waited an hour I got there two minutes after the Prince.

On page 186. "General Magnan," says M. Claude, "only joined those four actors (in the scene) a little while afterwards." General Magnan did not for one single moment appear at the Elysée during the meeting of which M. Claude treats. He received his orders in writing on the 2nd December at three in the morning.

And now for the infamous slanders.

Same page, 186. "The Prince opened a wardrobe and took from it four packets addressed respectively to his accomplices. The first packet for M. de Morny contained 500,000 francs. He received it that he might go and take possession of his post as Minister of the Interior. The second, addressed to de Saint-Arnaud, contained likewise 500,000 francs, *plus* 500,000 francs for Espinasse. The third, addressed to de Maupas, contained, in

addition to the money, the list of all the representatives, generals, men of letters, leaders of parties, who were to be arrested. The fourth packet and the smallest was intended for the police of the Elysée. It only contained 100,000 francs. . . .”

The whole is a tissue of abominable impostures. The Prince handed to M. de Morny or to me no sum of money whatsoever, absolutely none. Everything is false in this theatrical version of pretended and prepared packets of money. But, however low the origin of this infamous calumny, I for my part cannot rest content with despising it as I despise its authors, I wish once more to protest against it with all the indignation of my revolted conscience.

I have said that the Prince gave 10,000 francs to General de Saint-Arnaud to be distributed the next morning in gratifications. Assuredly it is not of this fact, generally ignored, that M. Claude wished to speak. He wished to make a great scandal, and he has not even had the merit of invention. This miserable imposture he simply copied from one of those libels of which we spoke in our preface, and the author whereof was condemned to a long term of imprisonment to purge his already not very honourable career.

But at the risk of making too much of this unknown who wrote the “*Mémoires of M. Claude*,”

let us show once more the improbabilities that have escaped his pen.

According to M. Claude it is during this evening of the 1st December and *at midnight* that the Prince handed me "the list of all the representatives, generals, men of letters, and party leaders" who had to be arrested immediately after my return to the Prefecture of Police. The real M. Claude, however, knew better than any one that such numerous and important arrests could not be arranged for at a moment's notice, especially under the conditions they had to be made. It would have been madness to pretend to do so. Those arrests we had prepared more than a week beforehand, and to make them effectual nothing less could have been done.*

We repeat once more that this new fabrication is so clumsy and so badly conceived that it is sufficient in itself to prove that the libel of which it is a part could not have for its author a former chief of the detective police, M. Claude.

* The most conclusive evidence of the utter and foundless fabrication of the "list" episode is to be found in the book itself, though it has probably escaped M. de Maupas' notice in the hurry of composition. According to the book M. Claude went to see M. Thiers about ten o'clock at night to warn him of his arrest. Therefore he was better informed than his chief himself, who according to him did not get the list until *midnight*.—*Trans.*

The night that still separated us from the 2nd December was not to be spent by all of us in the same fashion. To the Prince it was a night of calm repose, of the repose God gives to the conscience when it has accomplished a great duty. His orders had been given; he could do nothing but to wait until the moment when he was to show himself to the people. To M. de Morny, whose functions did not actively mix him up with the execution of the preliminaries to the *Coup d'État*, this night was what his predilections might choose to make it. He also might have found it an interval of rest.*

To General de Saint-Arnaud and to me it became the moment for decisive action.

General de Saint-Arnaud had to inform General Magnan of the part reserved to him, to give him his instructions; he had also to give his orders to Colonel Espinasse for the investment of the Assembly; in short, to see that each wheel of this marvellous mechanism of the French army was ready to move at the required moment.

* He didn't. On leaving the Elysée he went to a private ball. It was at this very entertainment that he gave the answer, almost become historical by now. A lady asked him: "M. de Morny, if there were a *Coup d'État*, and the President made a clean sweep of the Assembly, what would you do?" "Be sure, Madame, that I would find myself on the side of the handle," came the reply.—*Trans.*

Only a soldier can form an idea of the thousand and one precautions the eve of a battle imposes upon the general who commands. General de Saint-Arnaud foresaw, prepared everything; and if one compares the attitude of the army in presence of the people on the 2nd December with that of the periods of 1830 and 1848, one cannot fail to be struck with the contrast. And still they were the same soldiers, the same children of the people, the heirs to the same principles, but they had not the same chiefs; there are circumstances when the chief makes the soldier.

To be just, it is both to General de Saint-Arnaud and to General Magnan that this praise should be awarded. In accepting the command of the army of Paris the latter was well aware that one day he would have to throw in his lot with that of the Prince. He had been warned, and given the assurance of his co-operation; one could build upon his faith as on his courage.

He himself had asked not to be informed beforehand of the events of which he was to take so large a share; he wished to remain the soldier who obeys his chief, takes no part in the political movement, and confines himself to his military rôle; this rôle sufficed to render his name illustrious.

On leaving the Elysée I had offered a seat in my

carriage to Colonel de Béville, who was entrusted with all the documents we sent to be printed. He was to spend the night at the national printing works to superintend this operation, and above all to watch that the secret, once having made its way into the building where the necessities of material execution compelled us to thrust it a few hours before events, did not get out of it again.

Besides, M. de Saint-Georges, the director of the national printing works, was also devoted to the Prince; one might depend on his active and intelligent co-operation. He had received instructions to have always within call a sufficient number of intelligent workmen ready to execute such work as was often required in a hurry at the hands of the national printing works. Thanks to this precaution an extra call of workmen outside the regular hours was no longer calculated to arouse suspicion.

A company of mobile gendarmerie, commanded by brave Captain de la Roche d'Oisy, arrived at the printing works at the same time with Colonel de Béville. The doors of the building closed upon them; they remained hermetically shut up for the whole night. Sentries posted inside each door, at each window, had the strictest orders to prevent all communication with the outside. It is but just

to state that there was not the least attempt to contravene the given instructions.

Once those indispensable precautions taken, the work of printing began, and a few hours afterwards MM. de Saint-Georges and de Béville, having taken possession of all the proclamations of the President, of the Minister for War, and of the Prefect of Police, only awaited the hour previously agreed upon to bring them to me.

On leaving Colonel de Béville, at eleven o'clock at night, I rapidly went the round of the principal thoroughfares leading to the Prefecture of Police, before entering the building itself. A profound tranquillity and evident ignorance of what was being prepared prevailed everywhere.

I set to work immediately. The heaviest part of the work was just beginning for me. On the success of the principal measures to be executed by the Prefecture of Police depended undoubtedly the success of the *Coup d'État* itself. An important arrest, such as, for instance, that of General Lamoricière, of General Changarnier, or of a deputy of the Mountain, had but to miss fire and the alarm would instantly be given. The terrible consequences of such a failure need not be insisted on. The regiments might in such an event be listening to the voice of one of their old generals before they

had received the orders of their chief. Was not hesitation on the part of the army to be apprehended from that moment? Might we not also fear the immediate assembling of all the hostile representatives, and might they not constitute a centre of resistance the more threatening from having a man of action at its head and part of the Paris population for an escort?

The Mountain, if warned, would have immediately sprung to arms; its members were perfectly ready. The cover of the night would have allowed them to throw up barricades, and the first glimmering of dawn, instead of beholding our complete triumph, would have witnessed the dire spectacle of a great city a prey to the commotion that results from the violent shock of opposing parties.

I hid not from myself an atom of the immense responsibility I had undertaken. With the most minute attention I myself had prepared the smallest details of this vast enterprise.* The essential

* I had been assisted in those preparations by two high functionaries of the Prefecture of Police. One was personally attached to me; he had accompanied me throughout my career as private secretary. I knew the reliance I could place on his devotion and discretion. The other directed one of the important branches of the Prefecture, and though he was related to M. Guizot, for whom he cherished a sincere affection, I was firmly convinced that the sentiment of duty would religiously make him keep the secrets I confided to him, or even those he might guess. The co-operation of those two auxiliaries proved of the greatest

point was to have for instruments men safe and sure, ready to follow me at the peril of their lives.

Every arrest was to be personally directed by a commissary of police. For the last month I had successively interviewed each of those magistrates in my private office. I had chosen from among them for the most important missions those whom I judged to be the most energetic. With one signal exception I found the most absolute devotion.*

All those who were to act on the 2nd December had been ordered not to stir from their official residence during the previous evening, and received at two o'clock in the morning instructions to present themselves at the Prefecture of Police at a given moment and within short intervals, between three and half-past four A.M. At their arrival they were

value to me, and I beg them to accept in this place a renewed expression of my gratitude.

* One single commissary, when I gave him the order to arrest one of the members of the Assembly, appeared to me to hesitate. Instead of the zealous interest I had met with from his colleagues I met with objections. They clearly showed me that he had fathomed our designs, and that if not absolutely hostile he did not care to engage in an enterprise the importance of which frightened him. His features bore the traces of the doubts that agitated him. This man was afraid. It will be easily understood that I could not allow an agent who had surprised, or at least guessed, our secret to remain at large. Consequently he only left my room to be put in a place of surety. All indiscretion on his part was avoided. Let me add that this commissary was not M. Claude.

absolutely isolated from one another. Each of them was introduced to my room by himself and received every one of his instructions from me alone. I might without risk have trusted to those faithful magistrates, disclosed to them at this eleventh hour the importance of the act in which they were to co-operate. Nowhere have I seen the sentiment of duty, the religion of secrecy, more strictly observed than at the Prefecture of Police. But it is always an error at such a moment to tell what may be kept hidden; consequently I confined myself to announce to each commissary the arrest with which he was entrusted, leaving him in ignorance that he was participating in a collective measure.

This hour, during which I gave their instructions to my commissaries, is one of those that have left the most vivid recollections. If, as I have said, not one of them received from me the secret of the collective act with which they were associated, all, intelligent as they were, understood that they were co-operating in the *Coup d'État* so long and so often foretold. If none of them interrogated me, if none hesitated, I could but think that in their inmost heart they had weighed the responsibility they were about to undertake.

When I said to one, "You will proceed to the

arrest of General Changarnier ;" to another, "Go and arrest General Lamoricière ;" to others again, "Go and arrest General Bedeau, M. Thiers, General Cavaignac," all representatives of the nation, illustrious men with the prestige of their high positions in the State or their eminent services upon them, must they not have immediately guessed, from the importance of the personages pointed out, the importance of the enterprise in which they engaged ?

But they perceived at the same time that the Prince accompanied his resolve by the most energetic measures, and they knew from experience that, given sufficient vigour, one may dominate the most critical situations. This to them was already a condition of confidence, and I may add that my language and my attitude did but increase it.

But however devoted those excellent auxiliaries were, it required at such an hour as this more than a dry and commonplace order ; one had to stimulate their zeal, to excite their energy, communicate to them the faith with which their chief was animated. To each I recalled in brief terms what his duty required of him, the perils courage and energy can brave when the soul is inspired ; I enjoined them to shrink from no measure in the execution of their mission ; but above all to protect and to

respect, at the risk of their own lives, those men whom they were about to arrest. I strove to imprint my exhortations with the ardour I myself felt. Standing before them I held their hand in mine, and I felt from the trembling which my appeal to their devotion evoked that I was understood, that my determination to succeed was shared; and this beneficent excitement often experienced in presence of a great duty to be accomplished, and which doubles both faculties and power, I felt my agents to be possessed of it. I was certain of the success of the delicate operations they were about to perform. Every few minutes, and without as yet communicating with any of his colleagues, a commissary left my room, repaired to a spot I had indicated to him, where he found ready and complete the staff necessary to an arrest which had to be made under such conditions of security that failure was almost impossible to result.*

* With renewed regret we are compelled to recur once more to the sorry "*Mémoires*" of M. Claude. It was but natural that he should think that in the narrative of the *Coup d'État* the incidents most eagerly looked for would be those supposed to have occurred at the Prefecture of Police during the night of the 1st and 2nd December. This time M. Claude has built up a scene altogether imaginary, and with the laudable intention of adding to his importance. "The next day," he says (vol. i. p. 9), "*at midnight* I was convoked like all the

Officiers de paix, commissaries of police (the equivalent of our English superintendent), sergeants, other commissaries of police to the Prefecture of Police in the private room of M. de Maupas."

It is absolutely false that there was either a convocation or a meeting of the commissaries of police *at midnight* in my private room. At no hour of this night of the 2nd December had there been a collective meeting of a number, however small, of commissaries of police in my private room. As has been seen, I received separately, and from three to half-past four, only those commissaries of police to whom the important political arrests were to be entrusted. M. Claude was not of the number. He did not enter the Prefecture of Police during that night. But the imposture takes a more serious character. Let us cite the words which M. Claude puts into my mouth as being addressed to the commissaries of police assembled there. "Here are the warrants to arrest Generals Cavaignac, Lamoricière, Changarnier, Le Flô, Colonel Charras, MM. Thiers and Baze . . . Messieurs, those arrests must absolutely be made before daybreak."

To credit me with such language *at midnight* and in presence of *all* the commissaries of police assembled is an improbability and a blunder. To deliver up our secret *at midnight* to all the commissaries of Paris, among whom several were notoriously devoted to our adversaries, would have been too ingenuous. It would have incontestably have warned our enemies of the peril to which they were exposed.

All the foregoing, however, seems to us merely invented in order to lead up to the following paragraph, in which the pretended M. Claude takes the stage and tries to give himself some importance:—

"When he had finished," says M. Claude, "and while a secretary distributed the warrants, M. de Maupas came towards me. I was hidden behind my colleagues, to whom I was a stranger, almost an enemy. M. de Maupas took me aside for a moment and said, 'Have you considered?'"

"I remembered the letter of that morning, the recommendations of M. Thiers.* 'I'll do my duty,' I answered, bowing to M. de Maupas.

* I had written the note about the pretended interview with M. Thiers on page 348 before I got thus far with my translation.—*Trans.*

and simple agents were thus on foot at the self-same hour, and without having caused the least alarm to the city, or having been enabled to gather the slightest clue of what they themselves were pre-

'I remain faithful to my post and can but obey my chief.' 'You are an honourable man and a good citizen,' M. de Maupas added, whereupon he left me."

This dialogue is a lie from the beginning to the end. I did not breathe to M. Claude a word of all the foregoing, for the very good reason that he did not set foot into my room on the night of the 1st and 2nd December.

We may be permitted to point out by the way a remarkably clumsy contradiction. It has been noticed that a few pages further back M. Claude made me enter the cabinet of the Prince *at midnight* of the 1st December, and take part in a conference which would have barely given me time to reach the Prefecture of Police at one o'clock in the morning. It is, however, at this hour of *midnight* that M. Claude represents me as receiving at the Prefecture of Police all the commissaries of Paris. The author of the "*Mémoires*" of M. Claude therefore gives himself within the space of a few short pages the straight and conclusive lie.

M. Claude, incapable of properly adjusting the events which he invents at his own pleasure, tries to give his work a semblance of truth when he adds (vol. i. p. 10): "I reproduce here as an authentic document the fac-simile of the warrant of arrest with which I was entrusted by M. de Maupas."

But the piece reproduced by M. Claude is not a warrant of arrest. It is simply the *fac-simile of a general order* which I gave several times during the morning of the 2nd of December. And let us note again with reference to this order another denial which M. Claude gives himself. The meeting of the Rue Boursaut, like those held at M. Odilon Barrot's, Daru's, and other personages—meetings of which we shall have to speak by-and-by—only took place between nine and ten in the morning, after every one knew what had happened during the night. Those various meetings could not be foreseen on the eve *at*

paring. Their chief, the head of the municipal police, the motor of the whole of the Paris force, the chief executor, completely ignored himself what the agents he had called out were to do. He had no occasion to ask this day, more than on any previous days when similar orders had been given and carried out, what the prefect meant to do with his men.

A most simple device enabled me to successfully disguise our projects. The surest way to hide an isolated fact from the most attentive observation is to deprive such fact of its exceptional character, and to cause it to disappear among a series of similar ones. The machinations of the various parties allowed the easy application of this theory. The demagogical agitation was a secret to no one. The London refugees, in order to incite their Paris

midnight, and being unable to guess that there would be a meeting at the Rue Boursaut, I could not hand M. Claude the previous evening *at midnight*, as he pretends I did, the following order:—

“PARIS, 2nd December, 1851.

“Cabinet of the Prefect of Police,

“To disperse, 12, Rue Boursaut, a meeting of representatives, whom to arrest if necessary.

“The Prefect of Police,•

“DE MAUPAS.”

This order was handed to M. Claude the 2nd December between nine and ten in the morning, at the same time that similar orders were given to eight other commissaries to disperse some other meetings of representatives. Therefore we cannot repeat too often that everything is invention in these various narratives of this pseudo M. Claude.

fellow-plotters to an appeal to arms and thus to prepare for their return, constantly announced their arrival as a signal to begin. Several times already I had caused the premature news of this demagogical invasion from across the Channel to be spread among my agents, and had directed the self-same groups which I intended to employ on the 2nd December on various points of the capital. On the 1st December the rumour ran at the Prefecture of Police that Ledru-Rollin, Causidière, and others, would reach Paris that night. Accordingly attention was wholly concentrated upon them, and the renewal of the preparations so often made in their behalf led people to believe that this time also the movement had reference to them.

The civil force of the Prefecture of Police was not the only one that required my attention, and which I had to employ. The Paris municipal guard, while remaining under the control of the Minister for War, was virtually under the orders of the Prefect of Police; it was his special militia, a select militia which always bravely vindicated the trust it inspired. I could depend upon its co-operation, but its chief, its colonel, a valiant soldier no doubt, was one of General Changarnier's creatures. Only very recently I ascertained once more that

his relations with the general continued. Accordingly I could only trust to him to a limited degree. Unable to risk my confidence, I made up my mind to dispense with his co-operation. From time to time I doubled the guard at the Prefecture, and for the last few days I had a company of foot and a company of horse picketed in the courtyard. Their ostensible mission was to move on certain points of Paris where some important arrests of London refugees and heads of secret societies were to be made. On the 1st December I renewed this order, and at three in the morning sent to my private room for several captains on whose implicit obedience I could rely. I gave them my instructions, and at the required hour they occupied the posts indicated at the head of their troopers. Some were to superintend the principal arrests with their detachments. They had orders to take up certain positions at a short distance from the domiciles where the arrests were made. They were to occupy those positions at the hour decided upon for the arrests, and await the summons of the civil authorities to assist the police in the event of resistance within the domicile itself, or from the crowds that might have gathered in the public thoroughfares. They had also to escort the carriages conveying the prisoners, and finally to see them safely lodged in Mazas.

I had chosen Mazas as a place of confinement for our State prisoners—first of all, because not wishing to keep them in Paris, Mazas did very well as a provisional arrangement, and was more than any other a house of detention safe against all attempt at rescue; secondly, because the journey to Vincennes, which had been discussed, seemed to me too long and too dangerous.

The direction of a place of detention as important as Mazas became, under the circumstances amounted to a downright political situation. It was not enough to arrest our political adversaries, we had to keep them safe against all attempts at evasion or revolt from within; we also had, in the interest of their personal security, to take measures that in the event of a riot their residence should be secured against all sanguinary struggle.

The governor of Mazas was an excellent servitor, but he had not been appointed to the post with a view to the events that were about to be enacted. This post did not only require a firm and faithful occupant, it required a man of superior judgment, capable of decisive measures at the right moment if confronted with serious contingencies, a man of tact who would take his share of the political misfortunes of men honourably vanquished. I attached great importance to its being thus. I estimated at

its full worth the soreness our necessarily vigorous measures would produce ; I wished to assuage their bitterness as much as possible.

Without therefore depriving the governor of Mazas of his administrative functions, I decided upon the appointment of a commissioner in extraordinary, under whose orders he would be placed, and whom I invested with discretionary powers. For this post I had selected Colonel Thiérion, of whose energy, tact, and devotion I felt assured. I requested his presence at five o'clock in my private room, where I handed him his nomination and gave him his instructions. I perceived both from his attitude and his language that I had not been mistaken in my estimate of him. Mazas was in safe hands, the State prisoners were placed under an intelligent authority.

But the obligations of the Prefecture of Police on this morning of the 2nd December did not cease with the important arrests and the details they involved. There was still much to prepare and to provide for.

The manifold resources of this vast administration had all to be set in motion either for action or for surveillance, a series of instructions had to be dispatched, and that before six in the morning, so that at seven, when Paris awoke under a

new Government, every one should be at his post, some having already accomplished their task, others awaiting events and ready to face them.

Besides the obvious number of agents, who at ordinary seasons perambulate the streets of the capital, insure its safety, its uninterrupted traffic, repress at their very birth all attempts at disturbance, watch the *hôtels garnis*,* the disorderly houses, the suspected foreigners, the political refugees, the returned convicts—besides those permanent guardians of public order the Prefecture of Police disposes of a considerable number of agents whom nothing points out to public attention, and who therefore are more advantageously situated than the former as regards observation and inquiry. They are the men whom custom designates under the name of secret agents. They are divided into two classes. The first have no relations save with the Prefect himself, whom they inform upon a variety of subjects—on the doings of political parties, on the attitude of the various classes of society, on the thousand and one public or private incidents which it is necessary the Government

* The term *hôtel garni* includes every dwelling-place the proprietor of which lets out even one *furnished room*. In such an event he is obliged to keep a register, open to the inspection of the police at every hour of the day and night.—*Trans.*

should know. The others, equally unknown of the general public, were at this period of 1851 divided under four divisional chiefs. Each of those chiefs was entrusted with the movements of his brigade, and had to receive its daily report previous to submitting it to the Prefect. It was against the penetration of those four chiefs of brigade that I had to be most on my guard, and it was from them above all that my designs must be hidden while giving them their instructions.

Less versed in the mazes of high politics than in the machinations of plotters, they fortunately believed in a socialistic movement; they looked for no hidden motive in my instructions to set on the watch their agents, who were, at the slightest incident, to come to me immediately and give an account of what they had seen or heard. They had both to acquaint me with the impressions produced by events, and to inform me of the resolutions of the secret societies, to which many of them belonged.

The placarding of the proclamations of the President, of the Minister for War, and the Prefect of Police was an important business. We wanted agents to do the posting, agents to protect the posting, still more agents to protect the proclamations when posted, against the natural violence of

our enemies. This numerous staff was divided into squads in one of the courtyards of the Prefecture of Police. Cards prepared beforehand told them both the quarter where they were to operate and the line of march they had to take. Their time was rigorously measured out to them.

The public sale of newspapers, of political publications, the printing of bulletins or proclamations of resistance, was to be strictly prohibited. The commissary entrusted with the task received special instructions; no vendors in the public thoroughfares, no printed matter without my official stamp.

The cafés, the restaurants, the *hôtels garnis* known as the ordinary meeting-places of the socialists might become organized centres of resistance; the list of them was ready, orders had been given to close some before daylight, to watch the others with great care, so as to convert them into traps that would permit the more easy arrests of the noted wire-pullers who would repair thither at the first rumour of events.

In the days of political tumult the regular supply of provisions is one of the necessities to which too great attention cannot be paid. The great arteries that would insure their easy circulation were guarded in a manner so as to be absolutely safe

from any attempt at disturbance until the arrival of the troops. The riding schools, the livery stables might become, against their proprietors' will, enforced centres for the recruitment of cattle on the part of the rioters, or even on that of the National Guard on horseback, whose dispositions were, to say the least, doubtful. A careful watch was ordered to be kept that the horses might not be perverted to purposes injurious to our designs.

Finally, besides the arrests which I shall call political, because political dissensions had dug the gulf that separated us from our adversaries, a series of arrests had to be made which to those who had to execute them might be explained by the necessities of public tranquillity; they were those of the socialist leaders, of the everlasting plot-mongers, of the constructors of barricades, the never-changing enemies of every constituted government, who, unable to pardon society for striking them with its laws, for withering them with its contempt, spit their gall against it, and satisfy their thirst for vengeance by trying to drown their worthlessness in a political or social perturbation. It is from those social outcasts, who have nothing to lose, nothing to risk but a life which is often their heaviest burden, it is from those born disturbers that always proceeds the

first appeal to arms; hence, to deprive it of its advance-guard, of its chiefs of the first hour, is to disarm the riot, to throw confusion in its ranks.

That I might know those sorry personages I had to wade through the most important *dossiers** in the political pigeon-holes of the Prefecture, those referring to the habitual leaders of street warfare. I at least gained this much from the examination, I knew which dangerous enemies to arrest before the combat. It is by the aid of those special indications that I drew up the list of those arrests, which, so perfectly natural on account of the position of the people at whom they struck, would arouse no suspicion either on the part of those who were to execute them, or on the part of those who would be the spectators or the confidants of the situation. They could be executed in batches, without further precautions than those of force; they required nothing but strong arms, which I had in plenty.

Those arrests would economise the chosen and intelligent men, of whom one is always sparing under similar circumstances. During the night I had received the reports from the agents entrusted with the watching and following of suspected

* The smallest judgment against a man leads to the preparing of a *dossier*; henceforth this man is marked by the police. This applies even to the infliction of a fine.—*Trans.*

individuals.* Among the number were some that had to be arrested. Those reports gave me the certitude of finding them at their homes. By a strange contradiction, it was just on the very day when our adversaries had most to fear from our action that they seemed to have regained their confidence. A complete calm seemed to have succeeded, at least apparently, to the agitation which the reports of the previous days had signalised. No meetings during the day of the 1st December, no conferences; every one who, a few days previously, had forsaken his domicile during the night was tranquilly reposing there now.

At half-past five all my instructions had been given, all my agents had been set in motion and were proceeding to the spots whither their mission called them; and for about an hour the Prefecture resumed the tranquillity of its ordinary days. Two devoted friends whom I had sent for to assist my secretaries made their appearance about this time in my private room. My most trusted secretary and one of the high functionaries of the police were with me; we awaited with confidence the first tidings of

* Each day a comparatively considerable number of persons were watched and followed. The agents entrusted with this service could therefore attach no undue importance to measures taken with regard to such individuals. Besides, to have some one watched implies by no means the intention of subsequent arrest

the execution of my orders.* To keep up our patience we received from time to time some of the reports which the night superintendents hand in each morning at the termination of their tour of inspection. All were couched in the customary terms ; they were laconic and reassuring. "No incident to report ;" "The neighbourhood is profoundly quiet ;" "Paris is tranquil"—such was, like the previous night, the summary of those reports. Paris slept peacefully ; we could ask nothing better while awaiting the serious tidings we expected.

In those moments of surcease and meditation all the reflections I had made before assuming the grave responsibility in which I was now engaged naturally came back to my mind. At that hour, as at the beginning, I remained deeply convinced that I was performing a great duty in thus co-operating to the saving of my country.

Politics put aside, I had to ask myself if I did not deviate from my rôle of magistrate. I remained strictly faithful to it. The plot of which General Changarnier was the spirit aimed at the overthrow of the established power. The machinations of our

* The two functionaries alluded to are the self-same of whom I have previously spoken, and who gave me an intelligent, active, and devoted co-operation.

adversaries were known, the proofs abounded in our hands. To prevent the execution of their designs, to put it out of their power to hurt, became an imperative duty; we accomplished it regularly, lawfully, neither more nor less. A vast demagogic conspiracy threatened public tranquillity; at the same time civil war and revolution were at the gates. The mission of the Prefecture of Police was to avert this double explosion, to leave nothing untried to prevent those dire calamities. This mission we were fulfilling with firmness. My conscience was at rest. I remained within the right and within the law.

END OF VOL. I.